

THE BEAGLE CONFLICT

ARGENTINA AND CHILE ON THE BRINK OF WAR
VOLUME 1: 1904-1978



ANTONIO LUIS SAPIENZA



Helion & Company Limited
Unit 8 Amherst Business Centre
Budbrooke Road
Warwick
CV34 5WE
England
Tel. 01926 499 619
Email: info@helion.co.uk
Website: www.helion.co.uk
Twitter: @helionbooks
Visit our blog <http://blog.helion.co.uk/>

Published by Helion & Company 2023
Designed and typeset by Farr out
Publications, Wokingham, Berkshire
Cover designed by Paul Hewitt, Battlefield
Design (www.battlefield-design.co.uk)

Text and maps © Antonio Luis Sapienza
Fracchia 2023
Illustrations © as individually credited
Colour artwork © David Bocquelet, Tom
Cooper and Ivan Zajac 2023

Every reasonable effort has been made to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. The author and publisher apologise for any errors or omissions in this work, and would be grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or editions of this book.

ISBN 978-1-804513-73-6

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication
Data
A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the express written consent of Helion & Company Limited.

We always welcome receiving book proposals from prospective authors.

CONTENTS

Abbreviations	2
Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	3
1 Background	3
2 The Beginning of the Disputes	9
3 The First Incidents	10
4 Escalation in the Border Crisis, in Laguna del Desierto	18
5 The Alto Palena Dispute	23
6 Dispute of the Puna de Atacama	24
7 More Border Incidents Caused by Argentina	27
8 The Crisis Breaks Out	30
9 Mediators Urgently Needed!	37
10 War Clouds on the Horizon	39
11 Ready for Combat?	47
12 War Seems Inevitable. The Failure of Negotiations	50
13 The Argentine Armed Forces in 1978	52
14 The Chilean Armed Forces in 1978	72
Appendices	93
I Table 41: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (Officers)	93
II Table 42: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (NCOs)	93
III Table 43: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (rank & file)	93
IV Table 44: Argentine Coast Guard ranks	94
V Table 45: Argentine National Gendarmeria ranks	94
VI Table 46: Chilean Armed Forces ranks (Officers)	94
VII Table 47: Chilean Armed Forces ranks (NCOs)	95
VIII Table 48: Chilean Carabineros Ranks	95
Bibliography	96
Notes	98
About The Author	100



ABBREVIATIONS

ACH	Armada de Chile/Chilean Navy	ELINT	Electronic Intelligence
ADF	Automatic Direction Finding	ENAEER	Empresa Nacional de Aeronáutica/National Aeronautics Company (Chile)
AE	Aviación del Ejército/Army Aviation (Argentina)	ESAN	Escuela de Aviación Naval/Naval Aviation School (Argentina)
AEW	Airborne Early Warning	EWS	Early Warning System
AGS	Survey Ship	FAA	Fuerza Aérea Argentina/Argentine Air Force
AKA	also known as	FAB	Fuerza Aérea Boliviana/Bolivian Air Force
AP	Transport Ship	FACH	Fuerza Aérea de Chile/Chilean Air Force
ARA	Armada de la República Argentina/Argentine Navy	FAP	Fuerza Aérea del Perú/Peruvian Air Force
AMD-BA	Avions Marcel Dassault-Breguet Aviation (France)	FLOMAR	Flota del Mar/Sea Fleet (Argentina)
APD	Destroyer Escort-Transport	FMA	Fábrica Militar de Aviones/Military Aircraft Factory (Argentina)
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare	GDT	Grupo de Tareas/Task Force Group (Argentina)
BAAZ	Base Aeronaval Almirante Zar/Admiral Zar Naval Air Base (Argentina)	GNA	Gendarmería Nacional Argentina/Argentine National Gendarmerie
BAC	British Aircraft Corporation	HMS	Her Majesty's Ship (U.K.)
BACE	Base Aeronaval Comandante Espora/Commander Espora Naval Air Base (Argentina)	HUD	Head Up Display
BAM	Base Aérea Militar/Military Air Base (Argentina)	IAI	Israel Aircraft Industries
BAPI	Base Aeronaval de Punta Indio/Punta Indio Naval Air Base (Argentina)	ILS	Instrument Landing System
BIM	Batallón de Infantería de Marina/Marine Infantry Battalion (Argentina)	IM	Infantería de Marina/Marine Infantry (Chile)
BIPNA	Batallón de Infantería de la Prefectura Naval Argentina/Coast Guard Infantry Battalion (Argentina)	INAC	Instituto Nacional de Aviación Civil/National Institute of Civil Aviation (Argentina)
BNPB	Base Naval de Puerto Belgrano/Belgrano Port Naval Base (Argentina)	LAN	Línea Aérea Nacional de Chile, also known as LAN Chile.
CASA	Construcciones Aeronáuticas S.A. (Spain)	LADE	Líneas Aéreas del Estado/State Air Lines (Argentina)
CATOS	Comando Aéreo del Teatro de Operaciones Sur/South Theatre of Operations Air Command (Argentina)	LADECO	Línea Aérea del Cobre (Chile)
CAVE	Comando de Aviación del Ejército/Army Aviation Command (Chile)	LARC	Lighter, Amphibious, Resupply, Cargo Vehicle
CB	Grupo de Caza Bombardero/Fighter-Bomber Group (Argentina)	LCIL	Landing Craft Infantry (Large)
CEV	Centro de Entrenamiento de Vuelo/Flight Test Centre (Argentina)	LCU	Landing Craft Utility
CL	Crucero Ligero/Light Cruiser	LCVP	Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel
COA	Comando de Operaciones Aéreas/Air Operations Command (Argentina)	LSD	Dock Landing Ship
COAN	Comando de la Aviación Naval/Naval Aviation Command (Argentina)	LSM	Landing Ship (Medium)
COIN	Counterinsurgency	LST	Landing Ship (Tank)
COFS	Comando de la Fuerza de Submarinos/Submarine Force Command (Argentina)	LVTP	Landing Vehicle, Track, Personnel
COMSUB	Comando de Submarinos/Submarine Command (Chile)	MBB	Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm (Germany)
CTA	Comando de Transporte Aéreo/Air Transport Command (Chile)	MG	Machine Gun
DD	Destroyer	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer	NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
DGAC	Dirección General de Aeronáutica Civil/General Directorate of Civil Aviation (Chile)	OAS	Organisation of American States
DGFM	Dirección General de Fabricaciones Militares/General Directorate of Military Manufacturing (Argentina)	PCC	Patrol Combat Corvette
DINA	Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia/National Directorate of Intelligence (Chile)	PFG	Patrol Frigate Guided Missiles
EA	Ejército Argentino/Argentine Army	PNA	Prefectura Naval Argentina/Argentine Coast Guard
ECH	Ejército de Chile/Chilean Army	PT boat	Patrol Torpedo Boat
		PTF	Patrol Torpedo Fast
		RMI	Radio Magnetic Indicator
		SAF	Servicio Aerofotogramétrico/Aerophotogrammetric Service (Chile)
		SAR	Save And Rescue
		TIAR	Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Recíproca/Inter American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance
		TOAC	Teatro de Operaciones Austral Conjunta/Austral Joint Operations theatre (Chile)
		TOC	Teatro de Operaciones Centro/Central theatre of Operations (Chile)
		TONO	Teatro de Operaciones Nor Oeste/Northwest Theatre of Operations (Argentina)

TON	Teatro de Operaciones Norte/North theatre of Operations (Chile)	VAR	Vehículo Anfibio a Ruedas/Wheeled Amphibious Vehicle
TOS	Teatro de Operaciones Sur/South Theatre of Operations (Chile/Argentina)	VHF	Very High Frequency
UN	United Nations	VOR	Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Range
USSR	Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics	YFB	Ferry
VAO	Vehículo Anfibio a Orugas/Tracked Amphibious Vehicle	YPF	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales/Fiscal Oilfields (Argentina)
		ZP	Zona de Protección/Protection Zone (Argentina)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his deep gratitude to Argentine Aviation Historians Esteban Raczyński, Vladimiro Cettolo, Atilio Marino, Argentine Air Force Commodore (Ret.) Gabriel Pavlovic, Argentine Air Force NCO (Ret.) Walter Marcelo Bentancor, the Chilean historian Claudio Cáceres Godoy, Michel Anciaux, Peruvian historian Amaru Tincopa, Archivo General de

la Nación Argentina, Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina, Museo Nacional de Aeronáutica de Argentina, Fuerza Aérea de Chile, Museo Nacional Aeronáutico y del Espacio de Chile, Archivo y Biblioteca Histórica de la Armada de Chile, for the invaluable data and photos for this volume.

INTRODUCTION

The Beagle Conflict was a territorial dispute between Argentina and Chile over the determination of the layout of the eastern mouth of the Beagle Channel, which affected the sovereignty of the islands located south of the channel, and east of the meridian Cape Horn and its adjacent maritime spaces. It was a spark together with two piles of gunpowder: the military regimes of Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla in Argentina and Captain General Augusto Pinochet in Chile. Subsequent events almost dragged both countries into an all-out war, which thankfully did not happen.

It all began in the early nineteenth century but it intensified in the 1970s, especially after the signing of the Arbitration Agreement in London on 22 July 1977. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had been appointed as arbitrator of the border dispute, but they in turn had to appoint an Arbitration Tribunal of five judges of the International Court of Justice. The arbitral agreement granted Chile the Lennox, Nueva and Picton Islands, located in the Beagle Channel. While the Pinochet government hastened to acknowledge the ruling, the same did not happen on the Argentine side, since the ruling allowed Chile the projection in the Atlantic, so feared by Argentine nationalist groups. The Argentine Government expressed reservations about the arbitral decision, and the members of the Argentine Military Junta decided to postpone the declaration of annulment of the ruling. Direct bilateral negotiations with the Pinochet regime were proposed to resolve the differences

regarding the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Beagle Channel (rejecting the grounds of the award that granted Atlantic projection to Chile). But the Chilean government clung to what had been established in the arbitral agreement award.

Possible negotiations were cut short when the Argentine Government declared the arbitration award null and void on 25 January 1978, a few days before the expiration of the term granted to the parties for the decision to enter into force. Despite this, Videla and Pinochet met on 20 February, in the Chilean town of Puerto Montt, where they signed an Act committing themselves to continuing with bilateral negotiations. Military activities were also stopped and freedom of navigation in the disputed area was secured.

This relaxation was short-lived. Warmongering statements were soon heard on both sides of the mountain range. In June 1978, personnel of the Argentine Army and Air Force began practice manoeuvres for war in the south. Likewise, the Argentine embassies abroad denounced a series of air incursions and ground mobilisation movements of the Chilean armed forces.

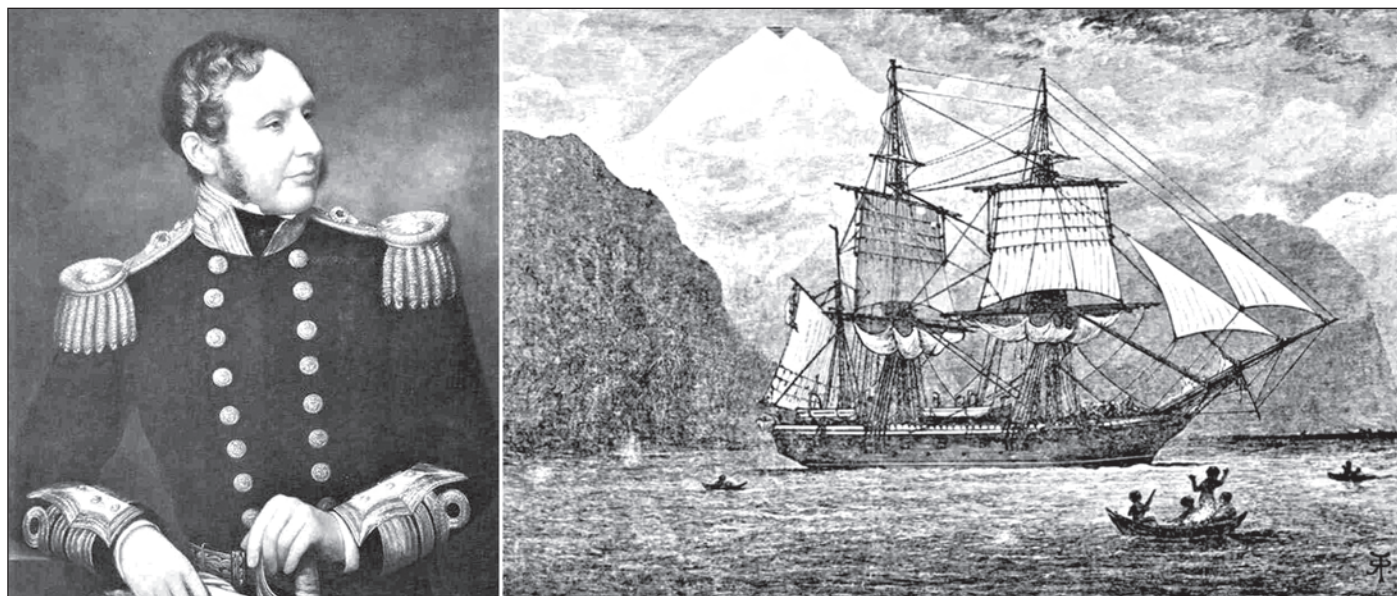
The tension began to present itself in the Beagle region. The Chilean Government installed surveillance posts and signs in front of them for Navy officers. For its part, the Argentine Government ordered the mobilisation of part of the naval fleet and troops to the south.

1

BACKGROUND

During the Spanish rule in Latin America, indigenous resistance and harsh climatic conditions hindered attempts to settle in the Patagonia and Araucanía area, with the exception of Valdivia, Chiloé and the Patagonian settlements on the Atlantic. After the

failed attempt to found Ciudad del Rey Felipe (King Philip's City) in 1584, on the shores of the Strait of Magellan, the Spanish Crown gave up new attempts to populate the region.



Captain Robert FitzRoy, Commander of the HMS *Beagle* (left). The brig-sloop HMS *Beagle* during the 1830 expedition to Tierra del Fuego (right). (Public Domain)

After the creation of the independent states in South America, the establishment of the limits between them was defined using the borders of the old colonial jurisdictions applying the principle of *uti possidetis*,¹ that is, the colonial territorial divisions would be maintained. The Andes mountain range, the natural border between the most inhabited areas of Chile and Argentina, avoided major discussions about the official establishment of a border line. But, when the populated areas began to expand, on each side of the border the historical documents about the Patagonian region were understood differently. It should be noted that these rights derived from the colonial era were *de jure*² and the sovereignty of neither of the states was exercised effectively in those latitudes of the Continent, which were considered *res nullius*³ by other countries and were under the control of indigenous peoples, not subject to the control of any state.

The Chilean Constitution of 1822 set the limits of the Chilean territory:

The territory of Chile knows its limits: to the south, Cape Horn; to the North, the depopulated Atacama; to the East, the Andes; to the West, the Pacific Ocean. The islands of the Chiloé archipelago, those of La Mocha, those of Juan Fernández, that of Santa María and other adjacent ones belong to Chile.⁴

These limits were repeated in the Constitutions of 1823, 1828, and 1833. As of 1830 Chile managed to leave behind the anarchy that followed the struggles for independence and from the 1840s, began to grant patents for the use of the Strait of Magellan. In keeping with that policy, the settlement of Fuerte Bulnes was founded on 21 September 1843 and that of Punta Arenas on 18 December 1848, creating a development pole and serving the steam navigation that was beginning to use the Strait of Magellan as a better alternative to Drake Passage, used up until then for navigation.

The possession of the Strait of Magellan was not only of interest to Chile and Argentina, but also to the European powers and to the United States. The cases of Gibraltar (1713), the Strait of Malacca and Singapore (1819), the Falkland Islands (1833) and the Panama Canal Zone (1903), all of which were occasionally occupied by the United Kingdom or the United States, demonstrated the desire of the powers to control the more important navigation routes.

Given that in the nineteenth century all of Chile's culture and almost all of its trade was directed towards Europe, direct access to the Atlantic Ocean was of paramount importance for the country. In 1895, the first settlers, under the Chilean flag, settled on the islands south of the Beagle Channel, as fishermen, shepherds or gold prospectors. From then on, Chile exercised different acts of sovereignty over the islands.

The lack of a national government until 1853 and the wars against Brazil and later against Paraguay prevented the execution of firm acts of Argentine sovereignty in the southern region. On 10 June 1829, the Governor in Buenos Aires created the Political and Military Command of the Malvinas Islands (the Falkland Islands), based on Soledad Island and with a theoretical jurisdiction over the islands adjacent to Cape Horn. However, its actions were limited to the Malvinas and the Isla de los Estados, and in 1833 the Malvinas were occupied and have been ruled ever since by the United Kingdom as a part of the British Empire.

The Governor of Buenos Aires, in charge of the foreign relations of the Argentine Confederation, Juan Manuel de Rosas, protested in December 1847 against the text of the Chilean Constitution of 1833 and claimed possession of the Strait of Magellan. In accordance with its historical position that affirmed that Patagonia was an integral part of the Cuyo region, the constitution of the province of Mendoza of 1854, also considered Cape Horn as its southern limit, later this claim was nationalised by National Law Nr.28 of 17 October 1862, which federalised the Pampas and Patagonian territories. In 1856 the first treaty of peace, friendship, trade, navigation and the borders between Argentina and Chile was signed, through which it was established that the border between both countries would have to be based on the principle of *uti possidetis* relative to what each state possessed in 1810 and it postponed the actual resolution of border disputes into the future. This Treaty was later invalidated by the Treaty of 1881. However, in practice this doctrine was insufficient, since during the colonial era vast territories were unexplored, or were not mapped or had never been populated, which made it impossible to determine who the administrator of such regions was during the period, in addition to the fact that not all colonial administrative records were complete.

It was Captain Robert FitzRoy, in command of the Cherokee-class brig-sloop HMS *Beagle*, who first sailed south of the Island of Tierra

The Border Treaty of 1881 between Chile and Argentina



Borders between Chile and Argentina before 1881



Borders between Chile and Argentina according to the Treaty signed in Buenos Aires on 23rd July 1881.

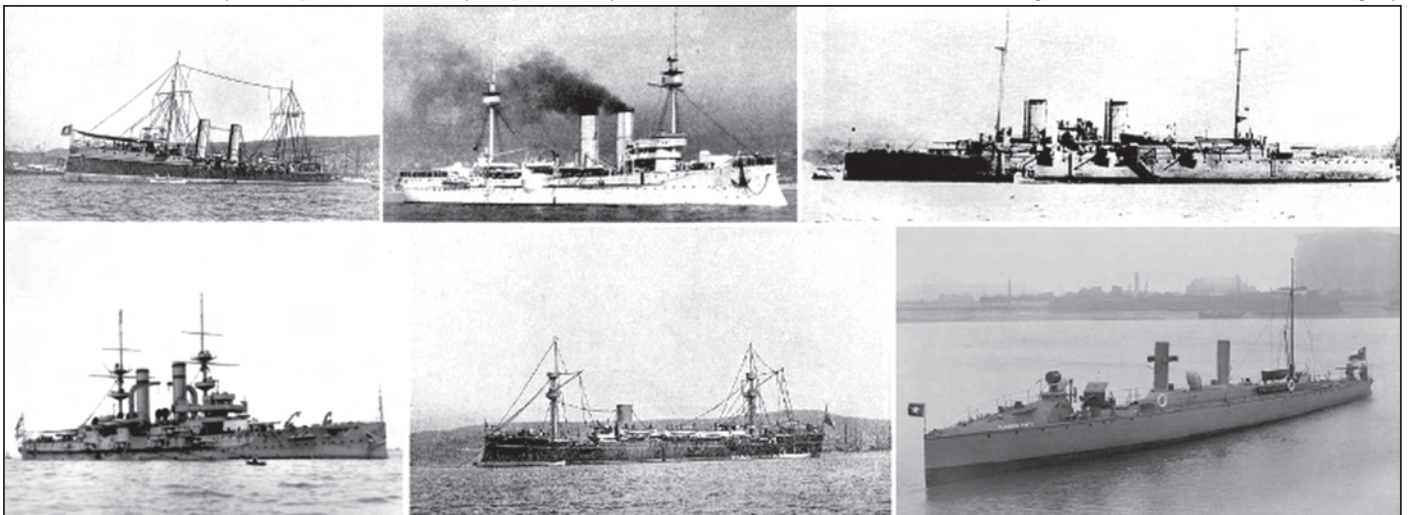
Maps showing the borders between Argentina and Chile before and after the 1881 Treaty. (Author's artwork)

government activities. The maps of the region reflected the ignorance of the coasts and islands and that caused problems for the navigators and explorers of the area, but even more so for the statesmen who had to decide on the borders. However, when the Boundary Treaty of 1881 was signed, at least in the Beagle Channel, the determining islands of the region were already known. The Argentine and Chilean cartography of the Beagle Channel immediately after the Treaty was used as evidence to demonstrate how that treaty was initially interpreted.

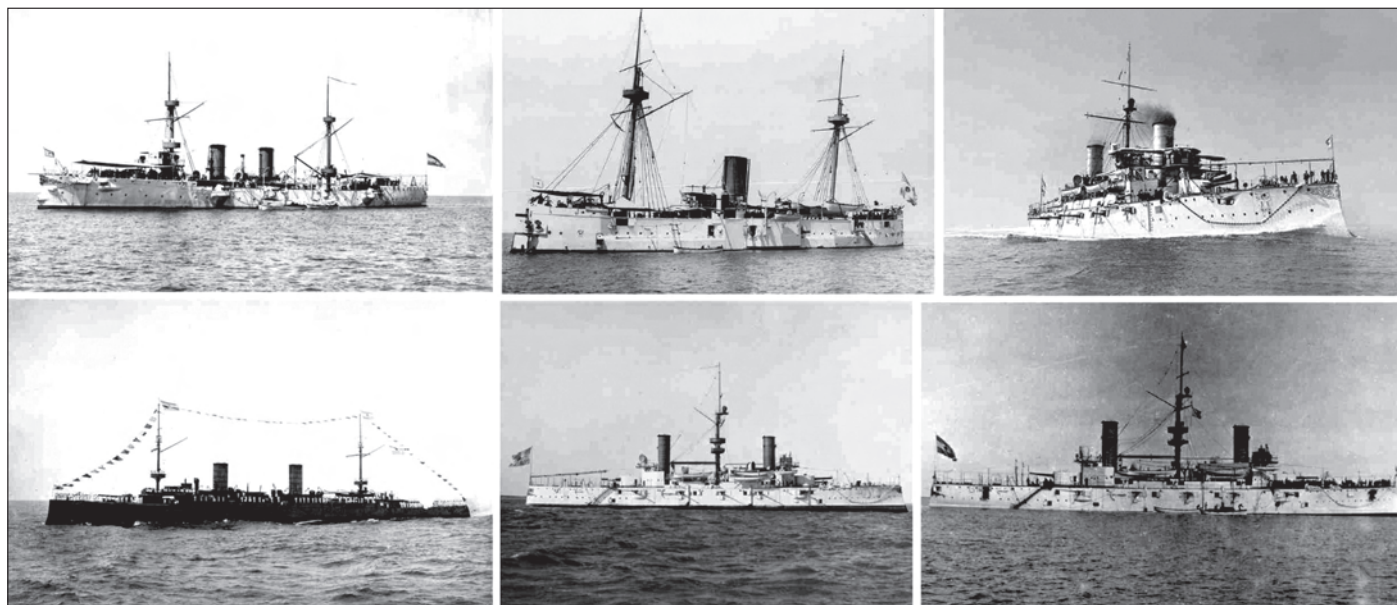
The 1881 Treaty was signed in Buenos Aires on 23 July by which the borders between the two countries were established and Chile ceded all of eastern Patagonia to Argentina. It was the subject of debate in both countries in the years after its approval because of the demarcation of the border along the Andes mountain range. Although the Treaty underwent some modifications in subsequent years, the status of the Beagle Islands was not subject to any change. Studies on the subject agree in pointing out that the initial interpretation of the 1881

del Fuego and discovered the channel in April 1830. The channel was named after his ship and was one of the last to be colonised by Argentina and Chile. Its cold climate, its remoteness and the scarcity of livelihood and any transport accessibility kept it away from

Boundary Treaty, both in Chile and in Argentina, agreed in granting the Picton, Nueva and Lennox islands to Chile. Until 1888, Chilean, Argentinean and other countries' cartography indicated the islands to the south of Tierra del Fuego to be under Chilean sovereignty



Some of the most important Chilean Navy warships. Top row, from left to right, Torpedo Boat ACH *Almirante Condell* and armoured cruisers ACH *Capitán Prat* and ACH *Esmeralda*. Bottom row, from left to right: armoured cruiser ACH *O'Higgins*, cruiser *Presidente Pinto* and PT Boat *Ingeniero Hyatt*. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



Some of the most powerful ships of the Argentine Navy in 1902. Top row, from left to right: cruiser ARA 25 de Mayo, battleship ARA Almirante Brown and armoured cruiser ARA Belgrano. Bottom row, from left to right: cruiser ARA Buenos Aires, armoured cruisers ARA Garibaldi and ARA Pueyrredón. (Histarmar Archives)

Table 1: Argentine Navy ships in 1902⁵

Type	Name	Years in service	Ton	Crew
Battleship	ARA Almirante Brown	1881–1932	4,200	330
Armoured Cruiser	ARA San Martín	1896–1935	6,773	488
Armoured Cruiser	ARA Pueyrredón	1898–1938	6,733	325
Armoured Cruiser	ARA Garibaldi	1895–1934	6,773	448
Armoured Cruiser	ARA Belgrano	1898–1946	6,773	484
Cruiser	ARA Buenos Aires	1895–1932	4,788	429
Cruiser	ARA 9 de Julio	1892–1930	3,575	346
Cruiser	ARA 25 de Mayo	1891–1921	3,180	344
Cruiser	ARA Patagonia	1887–1917	1,450	140
Light Cruiser	ARA Patria	1894–1927	1,070	159
River Battleship	ARA Independencia	1892–1946	2,330	230
River Battleship	ARA Libertad	1893–1946	2,330	230
Torpedo Boat	ARA Maipú	1881–1916	1,063	90
Torpedo Boat	ARA Espora	1890–1916	550	74
Destroyer/Torpedo Boat, Yarrow class	ARA Corrientes	1896–1930	250	54
Destroyer/Torpedo Boat, Yarrow class	ARA Misiones	1896–1930	250	54
Destroyer/Torpedo Boat, Yarrow class	ARA Entre Ríos	1896–1930	250	54
Minesweeper	ARA Bahía Blanca	1888–1918	127	15–20
Minesweeper	ARA Albatros	1888–1953	127	15–20
Minesweeper	ARA Golondrina	1888–1923	127	15–20
Minesweeper	ARA Gaviota	1888–1930	127	15–20
1st Class PT Boat, Bathurst class	ARA Bouchard	1890–1930	85	18
1st Class PT Boat, Bathurst class	ARA Bathurst	1890–1927	85	18
1st Class PT Boat, Bathurst class	ARA Thorne	1890–1928	85	18
1st Class PT Boat, Bathurst class	ARA Jorge	1890–1926	85	18
1st Class PT Boat, Bathurst class	ARA King	1890–1926	85	18
1st Class PT Boat, Bathurst class	ARA Pinedo	1890–1926	85	18
1st Class PT Boat. Thornycroft class	ARA Comodoro Py	1892–1928	110	22

Table 1: Argentine Navy ships in 1902 (continued)

1st Class PT Boat, Thornycroft class	ARA <i>Comodoro Murature</i>	1892–1926	110	22
2nd Class PT Boat, Thornycroft class	ARA 1 and 2	1882–1909	12	7
2nd Class PT Boat, Yarrow class	ARA 3 to 10	1889–1914	15	10
River PT Boat, Yarrow class	ARA <i>Alerta</i>	1882–1914	52	12
River PT Boat, Yarrow class	ARA <i>Centella</i>	1882–1916	52	12
River PT Boat, Yarrow class	ARA <i>Enrique Py</i>	1882–1915	52	12
River PT Boat, Yarrow class	ARA <i>Ferré</i>	1882–1916	52	12
Transport Tug	ARA <i>Azopardo</i>	1885–1922	383	38
Transport Tug	ARA <i>Delfín</i>	1889–1945	40	10–15
Transport Tug	ARA <i>Penguin</i>	1900–1945	38	10–15
Transport Boat	ARA <i>Pampa</i>	1895–1922	8,700	85
Transport Boat	ARA <i>Chaco</i>	1895–1925	8,700	85
Transport Boat	ARA <i>Rio Santa Cruz</i>	1894–1907	3,230	80
Transport Boat	ARA <i>1° de Mayo</i>	1894–1945	640	50
Transport Boat	ARA <i>Ushuaia</i>	1892–1912	402	25

Table 2: Chilean Navy ships in 1902⁶

Type	Name	Years in service	Ton	Crew
Armoured Cruiser	ACH <i>O'Higgins</i>	1898–1946	8,500	500
Armoured Cruiser	ACH <i>Esmeralda</i>	1896–1930	7,000	500
Armoured Cruiser	ACH <i>Capitán Prat</i>	1893–1935	6,901	480
Cruiser	ACH <i>Blanco Escalada</i>	1895–1940	4,568	427
Cruiser	ACH <i>Chacabuco</i>	1898–1952	4,500	400
Cruiser	ACH <i>Ministro Zenteno</i>	1896–1930	3,450	317
Cruiser	ACH <i>Presidente Errázuriz</i>	1890–1920	2,047	170
Cruiser	ACH <i>Presidente Pinto</i>	1890–1905	2,047	170
Armoured Frigate	ACH <i>Cochrane</i>	1874–1933	3,560	240
Armoured Ship	ACH <i>Huáscar</i>	1879–1934	1,745	200
Destroyer	ACH <i>Capitán Orella</i>	1896–1924	311	57
Destroyer	ACH <i>Capitán Muñoz Gamero</i>	1896–1924	311	57
Destroyer	ACH <i>Teniente Serrano</i>	1896–1924	311	57
Destroyer	ACH <i>Guardiamarina Riquelme</i>	1896–1928	311	57
Destroyer	ACH <i>Capitán Thomson</i>	1902–1924	350	65
Destroyer	ACH <i>Capitán Merino Jarpa</i>	1902–1924	350	65
Destroyer	ACH <i>Capitán O'Brien</i>	1902–1924	350	65
Torpedo Boat	ACH <i>Almirante Simpson</i>	1896–1907	800	90
Torpedo Boat	ACH <i>Almirante Lynch</i>	1891–1919	750	87
Torpedo Boat	ACH <i>Almirante Condell</i>	1891–1919	750	87
Gun Boat	ACH <i>Magallanes</i>	1873–1907	950	200
Gun Boat	ACH <i>Pilcomayo</i>	1879–1909	600	130
PT Boat	ACH <i>Quidora</i>	1881–1902	25	10
PT Boat	ACH <i>Rucumilla</i>	1882–1902	25	10
PT Boat	ACH <i>Guacolda</i>	1882–1902	30	12

Table 2: Chilean Navy ships in 1902 (continued)

PT Boat	ACH <i>Aldea</i>	1885–1920	80	15
PT Boat	ACH <i>Cirujano Videla</i>	1896–1922	140	22
PT Boat	ACH <i>Ingeniero Mery</i>	1896–1922	140	22
PT Boat	ACH <i>Ingeniero Hyatt</i>	1896–1922	140	22
PT Boat	ACH <i>Teniente Rodríguez</i>	1896–1922	140	22
PT Boat	ACH <i>Ingeniero Mutilla</i>	1896–1922	140	22
PT Boat	ACH <i>Guardiamarina Contreras</i>	1896–1922	140	22
Transport Steam Boat	ACH <i>Princesa Luisa</i>	1880–1904	120	100
Transport Boat	ACH <i>Casma</i>	1892–1905	2,627	126
Tug	ACH <i>Huemul</i>	1889–1921	145	25
Tug	ACH <i>Aquiles</i>	1890–1929	145	25
Tug	ACH <i>Cóndor</i>	1891–1937	145	25
Tug	ACH <i>Pisagua</i>	1898–1926	510	50
Tug	ACH <i>Freire</i>	1898–1958	94	17
Tug	ACH <i>Orión</i>	1900–1920	10	5
Tug	ACH <i>Meteoro</i>	1901–1918	650	100

and none of the maps shows the meridian of Cape Horn as the limit between Chile and Argentina. Argentinean maps showed agreement until 1888 (and some until much later) in granting Chile the islands to the south of the Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego.

The Armed Peace

After many attempts, an agreement embodied in the Boundary Treaty between Chile and Argentina of 1881 was reached, the simplicity brought clarity but also some shortcomings. These differences almost caused a war between the two countries during the period between 1890 and 1902, a period called La Paz Armada (The Armed Peace). The navy of both countries rearmed with powerful battleships and cruisers. In the case of Argentina, the Sea Fleet comprised (see Table 1 above):

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the armoured cruisers *M. Moreno* and *B. Rivadavia* were under construction.

In Chile, the following ships were all acquired in the same period of time (see Table 2 above).

An attempt was made to overcome those shortcomings with the Boundary Protocol between Chile and Argentina of 1893, which contains the mention of the oceanic principle: 'Chile in the Pacific and Argentina in the Atlantic',⁷ which Argentina considered applicable to the entire border, but Chile only to the border defined by the Andes mountain range, that is, up to parallel 52° South.

Given the frequency with which controversies appeared, the General Arbitration Treaty between Chile and Argentina of 1902 was agreed for the peaceful settlement of such disputes. This would later be the legal basis for the 1977 Arbitration Award.

However, since 1888 some Argentine maps had begun to include part of those territories in their sovereignty. In publications from 1894, Argentinean claims were already evident, mainly over Picton and Nueva. In the years after the signing of the treaty, gold deposits were found on the islands to the east of Navarino Island, which revived the interest of both countries in extracting resources from these territories.

During his second Presidency, Julio Argentino Roca decided to meet with the Chilean President Federico Errázuriz Echaurren in



Left, the Argentine President Lieutenant General Julio Argentino Roca (1898–1904). Centre: The meeting of Presidents Roca and Errázuriz aboard the Armoured Cruiser ACH *O'Higgins* of the Chilean Navy on 15 February 1899. Right, the President of Chile, Federico Errázuriz Echaurren (1896–1901). (Official Release, Public Domain)

Punta Arenas, travelling aboard the Cruiser *Belgrano*, escorted by the frigate *Sarmiento*, the light cruiser *Patria* and the transport boat *Villarino*. The meeting took place on 15 February 1899 aboard the Chilean Navy armoured cruiser *O'Higgins*, which was next to the cruisers *Zenteno* and *Errázuriz* and the transport *Angamos*. This event was known as *Abrazo del Estrecho* (Embrace of the Strait). However, in 1901 both countries mobilised their armies and navies on the borders and at the beginning of 1902 war seemed imminent. In the meantime, Argentina decided to carry out large-scale naval manoeuvres with its entire fleet that were seen as successful, and were watched by naval observers from a number of countries. Probably, this display of power acted as a spur to the diplomatic channel.

In the midst of great international pressure to avoid an armed conflict, on 28 May 1902, the *Pactos de Mayo* (May Pacts) were signed in Santiago de Chile with clauses limiting naval power and with arbitration by the British Crown to settle border disputes. The Pacts decreed that the ships under construction would not be

supplied (the Argentine armoured cruisers *Rivadavia* and *Moreno* were sold to Japan under the names of *Nisshin* and *Kasuga*)⁸ and the sea fleets would be reduced, disarming the battleships *Garibaldi* and *Pueyrredón* from Argentina and *Capitán Prat* from Chile, removing their guns, gunpowder, ammunition and torpedoes. Additionally, in the case of Chile, the battleships *Constitución* and *Libertad* that were being built in the United Kingdom were sold; they were acquired by the Royal Navy under the names of HMS *Swiftsure* and HMS *Triumph* respectively.

In November 1902, the results of the Arbitration Award that had been requested in 1896 from Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom was received; 54,225km² of the 94,140 in dispute remained with Chile, and it was established that the Beagle Channel and its southern islands were Chilean territory.

The tension did not ease up, but the arms race stopped. For this reason, it was not until 1914, with different geopolitical conditions, that new ships began to be integrated into the Argentine Sea Fleet.

2

THE BEGINNING OF THE DISPUTES

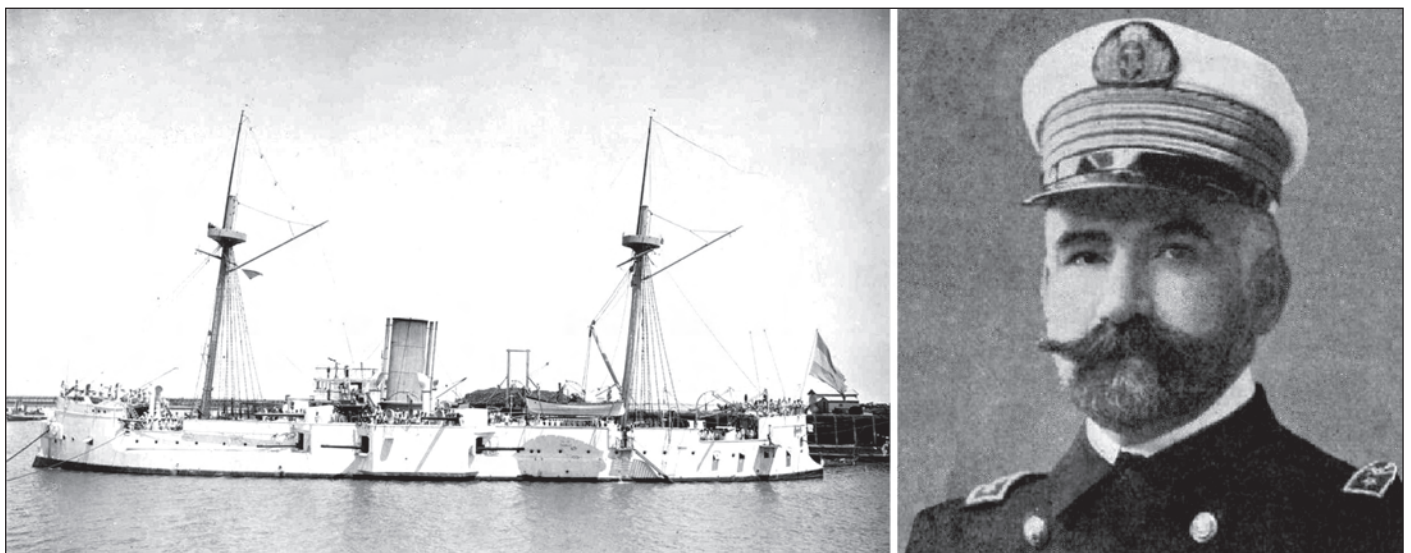
In a conference before the Argentine Geographic Institute in 1890, Julius Popper stated that the Beagle Channel ran through the Picton Pass between Navarino and Picton, and through Oglander Bay and it exited towards the Atlantic between the Lennox and Nueva Islands. It was based on his studies of the greater depth of this route with respect to the arm located to the north of Picton Island. According to him, the island and Nueva were to the north and east of the channel and were Argentine property.

Between 1899 and 1900, the Argentine Frigate Captain Juan Pablo Sáenz Valiente carried out a survey from Lapataia Bay to Cape San Pío aboard the battleship ARA *Almirante Brown*. In the memoir that he presented on his work in 1901, he stated that the Beagle Channel had two branches at its eastern mouth from Punta Navarro. The main and deepest (called Beagle) ran through Picton Pass and emptied into the Atlantic at Oglander Bay. The secondary channel, which he called the Moat Channel, corresponded to the Moat Bay, from Punta Navarro to Cabo San Pío. He further proposed that the boundary should be drawn by the greatest depths (thalweg).

It was only in 1904 that the islands of the Beagle Channel began to be considered in dispute by both countries – between 1881 and 1904 these islands had been accepted as indisputably Chilean. On 25 August 1904, the Argentine Foreign Minister, José Antonio Terry Costa, sent a note to the Chilean Minister stating that the Beagle Channel began in Pacific waters and ended in Atlantic waters, divided by a median line or axis between the sovereignty of both nations. He proposed to carry out the scientific operations necessary to determine the axis of the channel.

Frigate Lieutenant Segundo Storni stated in Bulletin No.258 of the Naval Centre in May 1905 that the Beagle Channel formed a delta at its mouth in the Atlantic, between Punta Jesse in Tierra del Fuego and Punta Guanaco in Navarino. He stated that Picton, Lennox and Nueva separated arms of the delta within the Beagle Channel and their sovereignty was not demarcated like the rest of the Channel's islands.

The Department of Hydrography of Argentina sent a note to the Hydrographic Office of Chile on 31 May 1905, stating that the eastern



Argentine Navy Battleship ARA *Almirante Brown* and its commander, Frigate Captain Juan Pablo Sáenz Valiente. (Histarmar Archives)



Map of the Conflict Zone, which was known as 'The Hammer.' (Diario La Tercera)

mouth of the Beagle Channel was, according to its discoverers, to the true north of Lennox Island, that is, towards the Picton Pass.

Paul Groussac published in the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación*, on 21 January 1915, that the Beagle Channel had two Atlantic mouths and that its mouth was the line between Cape San Pío and Yawl Point in Navarino. The limit was a bisector between the two points of the mouth, which should intersect Picton and Nueva, for which he proposed that the first be left for Chile and the second for Argentina.

Estanislao Zeballos, basing himself on Hull's 1860 course, stated in the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Prensa* on 17 May 1915 that the Beagle Channel formed a delta flowing into the Atlantic on the line that ran from Cape San Pío to Punta Guanaco in Navarino. The Picton Pass was the main arm carrying the limit, so Nueva and Picton must have been Argentinean. Zeballos also stated before the Argentine Geographic Institute that Picton, Lennox and Nueva and

the islands up to Cape Horn were in the Atlantic and according to the 1893 protocol they were Argentinean.

During the drafting of the 1915 protocol, the Argentine Foreign Ministry officially stated that the Beagle Channel reached Punta Navarro at 67° 15' West, from where it remained to be defined whether it continued in a straight line or through the Picton Pass, leaving the possession of the islands located to the east according to whatever was resolved on the channel. He also stated that the limit on the Beagle from Lapataia to Punta Navarro should be drawn along the median line of navigable waters.

On 21 January 1917, José Murature published his opinion in the newspaper *La Nación*, agreeing with that of Popper, but continuing the Beagle Channel through the Goree pass between Lennox and Navarino. According to Murature, Picton, Nueva and Lennox remained Argentinean because they were east of the Beagle, in the Atlantic.

3

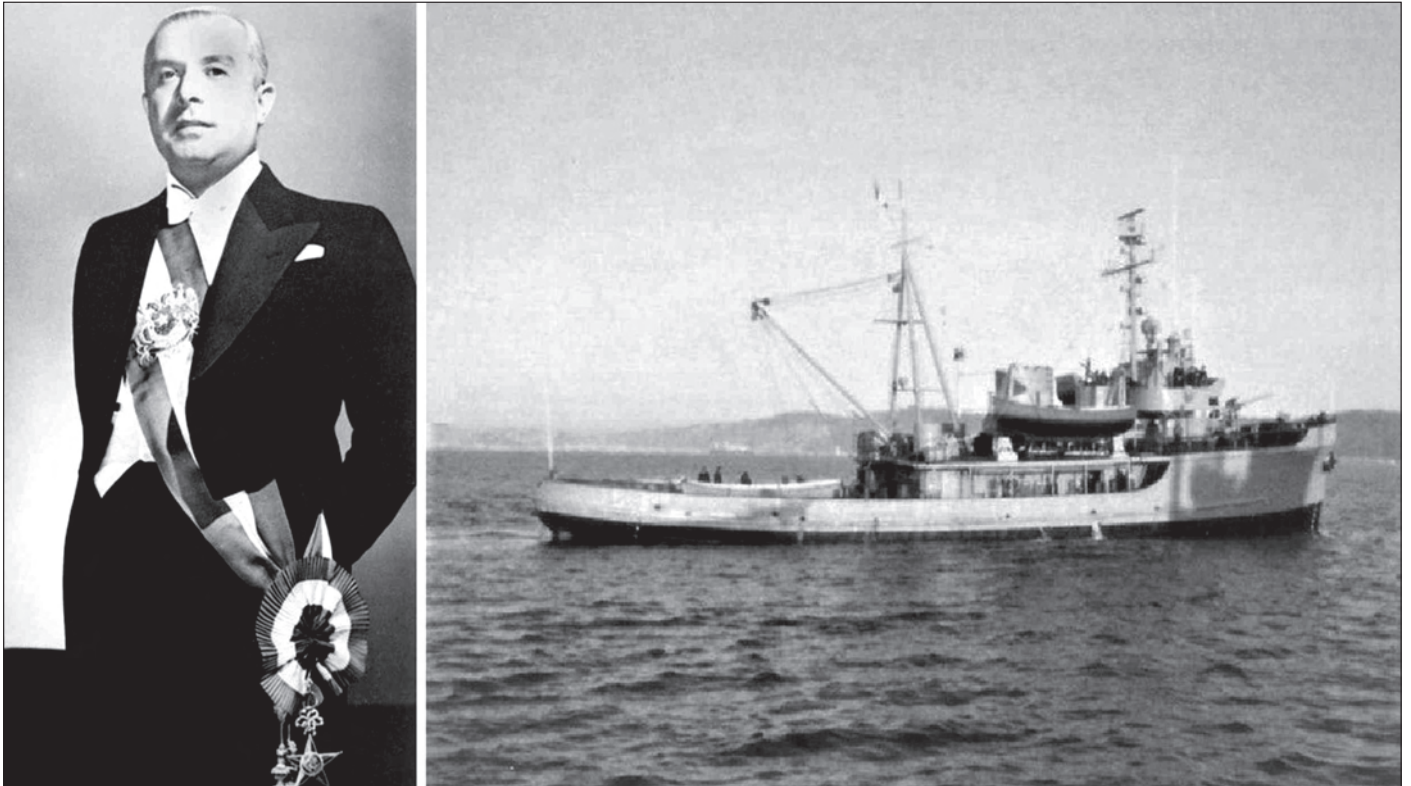
THE FIRST INCIDENTS

The first border incident in the waters of the Beagle Channel took place in March 1905 when an Argentine Navy ship removed a Chilean buoy from the so-called Banco de la Herradura on Navarino Island, and replaced it with its own. Four years passed before the Chilean Navy reacted. It was 7 July 1909, when the Chilean Navy patrol ship ACH *Meteoro*, under the command of First Lieutenant Benjamín Barros Merino, removed the Argentine buoy and placed another Chilean one, delivering the former to the naval authorities of the port of Ushuaia along with a note of thanks.

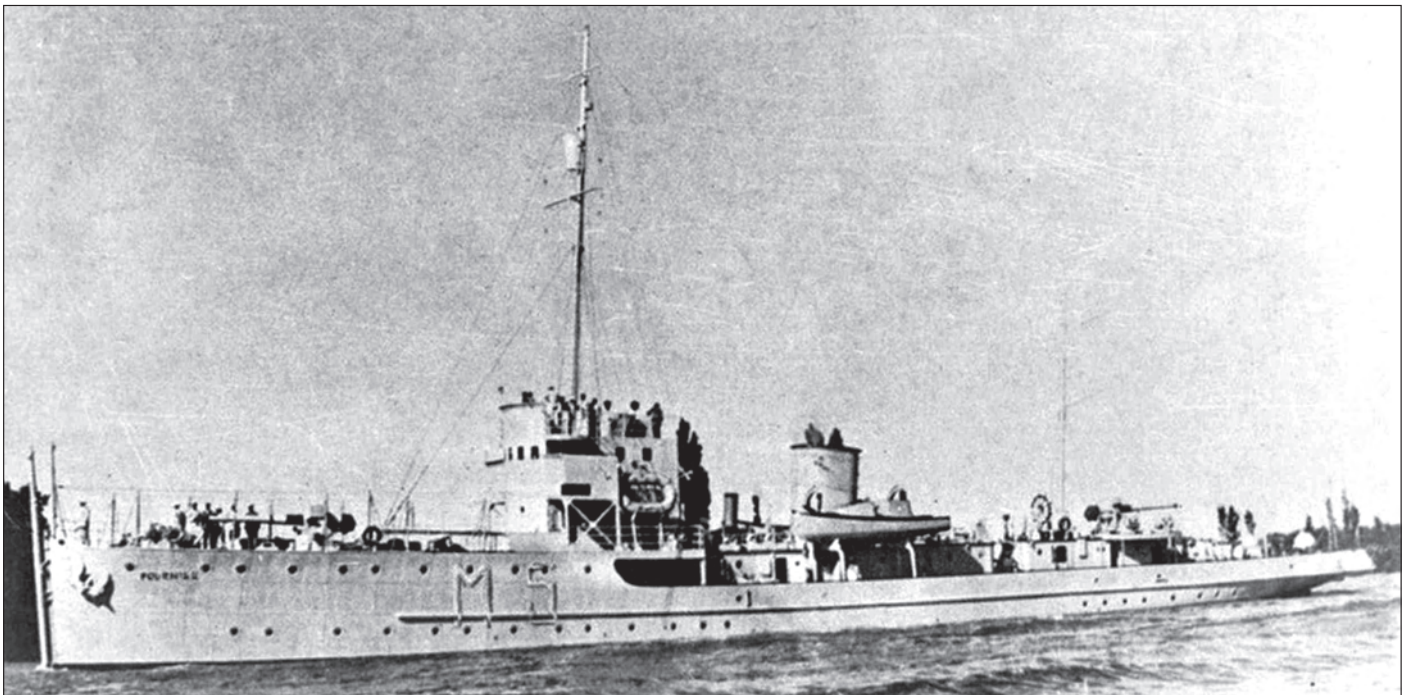
On 28 June 1915, a protocol was signed in Buenos Aires to request the services of the British Government based on the General

Arbitration Treaty of 1902, but the arbitration did not take place. That protocol provided that the arbitrator should decide to whom the sovereignty over the Picton, Nueva and Lennox islands and the adjacent islets and islands located in the Beagle Channel, between Tierra del Fuego to the north and the Dumas peninsula and the Navarino Island to the south belonged.

On 2 February 1933, an attempt was made to facilitate the ratification of the previous agreement with the commitment between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Miguel Cruchaga Tocornal (from Chile) and Carlos Saavedra Lamas (from Argentina), but it did not progress. Additionally, on 4 May 1938, a protocol was signed



Chilean President Gabriel González Videla (1946–1952) (Public Domain). On the right, the Chilean Navy Patrol Boat ACH *Lautaro* (PP-62). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The Argentine Navy Minesweeper ARA *Fournier* (M-5), which sank near Dawson Island on 22 September 1949, with the loss of all hands. (Histarmar Archives)

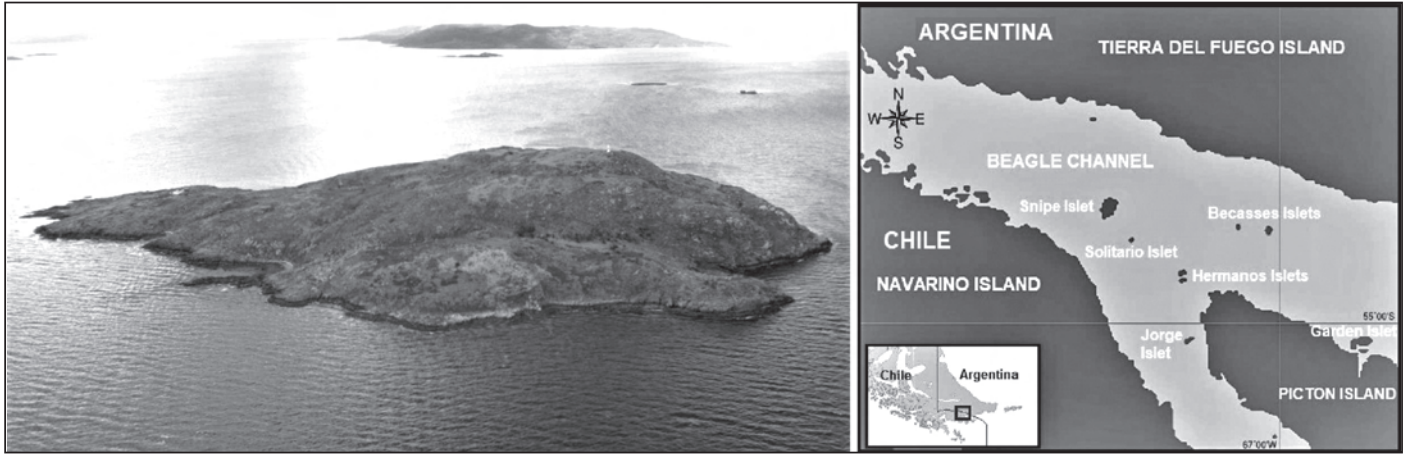
between the Foreign Ministers José Ramón Gutiérrez Alliende (from Chile) and Ramón S. Castillo (from Argentina), on the same terms as the previous protocol. The Attorney General of the United States of America was appointed as arbitrator, but this arbitration did not take place either.

In 1944, some sectors of Argentine society, inspired by the victories of European fascism, hatched plans to invade Chile that were aborted, but undermined the confidence necessary for the signing of treaties. As of 1945, it became frequent for Argentine warships to move with impunity through the waters of the Beagle

belonging to the neighbouring country, so, two years later, President Gabriel González Videla ordered the shipment of the brand new patrol boat PP-62 ACH *Lautaro* to Navarino Island to build a base-camp in the sector that would be the origin of the current town of Puerto Williams.

In 1948 Chile proposed to submit the Picton and Nueva islands to a court ruling, but the offer was rejected by Argentina because it did not include Lennox Island.

The improvements in navigation and in the capacity of both countries to exercise acts of sovereignty in the territories and seas



Left, Snipe Islet in the Beagle Channel (Public Domain). The map on the right shows the exact location of Snipe Islet in the Beagle Channel. (Author)



Puerto Williams Naval Base on Navarino Island, founded in 1953. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

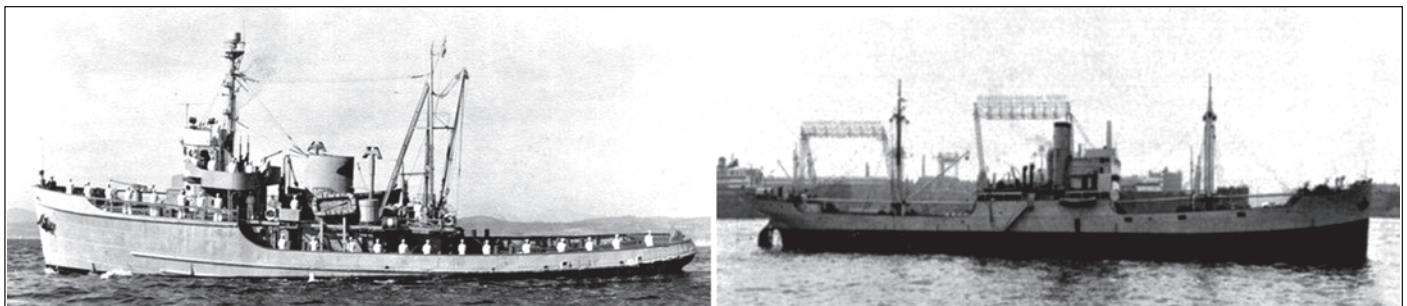
that they considered their own increased the number of incidents. On 22 September 1949, the Argentine Navy Minesweeper M-5 ARA *Fournier* under the command of Lieutenant Commander Carlos Negri was sailing westward in jurisdictional waters of the neighbouring country, when, in the middle of a storm, its boilers exploded and it crashed into a reef near Dawson Island, piercing her hull. The ship capsized and sank with 77 crew members on board; only a few horribly burnt bodies were found a few days later. While the Chilean Navy joined the rescue efforts, its government sent a note to Buenos Aires in which it was summoned to answer for what the Argentine ship was doing in the location and, immediately

afterwards, proceeded to regulate the passage of boats in the region. The sinking of the minesweeper ARA *Fournier* complicated relations between the two countries.

Between 1950 and 1951, the Argentine Navy Minesweeper M-11 ARA *Parker* entered Chilean waters three times, landing military personnel in Magellanic territory in order to draw up plans of the area. Similar landings were made on Picton Island in 1952. On 21 November 1953, Chile founded the Puerto Williams naval base on Navarino Island in the Beagle Channel, thus increasing its presence in the disputed area.

One of the most serious incidents took place in mid-1958, the so-called Snipe Islet incident, which, although completely ignored by Argentine public opinion, could have led both nations to an armed confrontation. Snipe Islet is a minor rock formation of only 32 hectares, about seven kilometres northeast of Picton Island and two kilometres north of Navarino Island.

On 12 January 1958, the Chilean Navy decided to install a lighthouse on the islet located within its jurisdictional waters. The lighthouse was intended to facilitate navigation for boats of both nationalities, and of that of any other that ventured through the aforementioned sea route that was extremely difficult due to the



The Chilean Navy patrol boat ACH *Lientur* (PP-60; left). The Chilean Navy transport boat ACH *Contramaestre Micalvi* (right). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

large number of promontories and rocks that extend along the route. To this end, at the end of April, the Chilean Navy patrol ship PP-60 ACH *Lientur* began its enlistment to carry out the mission, setting sail from Talcahuano to Punta Arenas, under the command of Ship Captain Hugo Alsina Calderón. It was not the first time that the Chilean Navy had set up facilities on the islet, since 12 January of the same year a blind beacon, installed by the Chilean Navy transport ship ACH *Contramaestre Micalvi*, had been operating there; a kind of milestone that marked the place where the lighthouse should be located.

On 1 May 1958, the ACH *Lientur* set sail from Punta Arenas and entered the anchorage located at the south of the islet, where it disembarked the personnel who were to carry out the work together with some armed sailors, who were to provide protection in case the situation required it. The team worked all morning and when, after several hours, everything was ready, they re-boarded in the early hours of the morning to leave for the return trip. Chile made the fact known through the Shipping Notice Bulletin and sent notifications to shipping lines and squadrons from different parts of the world shortly after the ACH *Lientur* moored at its anchorage.

Nothing presaged the slightest inconvenience and everything seemed to be going normally. However, on 10 May came news that shocked the Chilean Navy: The Argentines had landed on the islet, destroyed the lighthouse, replaced it with another, and withdrawn immediately afterwards. When the situation became known, the climate in the naval bases became extremely tense.

On Friday, 9 August, very early in the morning, Corvette Captain Hugo Alsina Calderón was woken up by the driver of the Commander-in-Chief of the III Naval Zone, Admiral Jacobo Neumann, to take him immediately to the offices of his superior. Once there, and in the presence of a Chilean Air Force group commander, who had overflown the area, Captain Alsina Calderón



The Argentine Navy Tugboat ARA *Guaraní* (R-7). (Histarmar Archives)

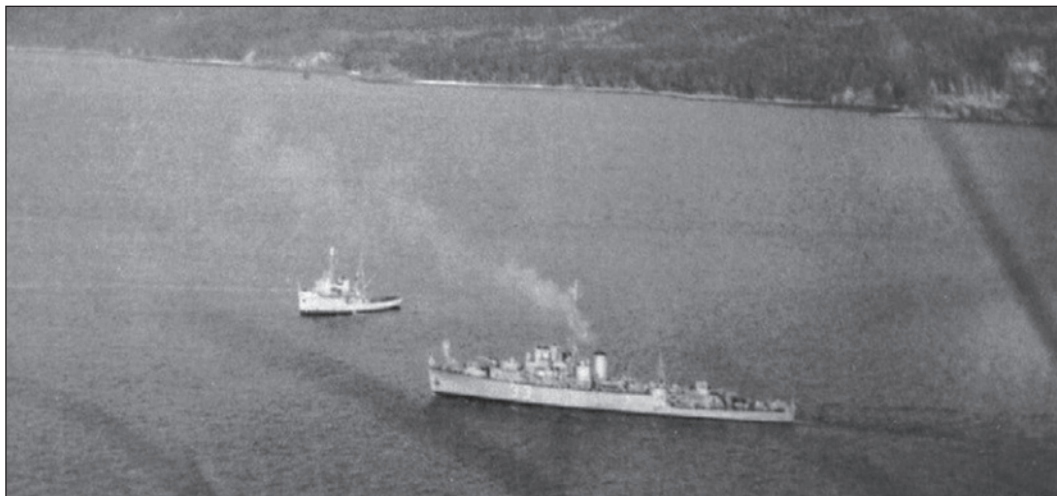
learned, to his surprise, that the lighthouse he had built in Snipe was gone and had been replaced by another one.

From the other side, when the Argentine Navy learned that its trans-Andean counterpart had installed the lighthouse, it rushed to dispatch tugboat R-7 ARA *Guaraní* to the area, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Gerardo Zariategui, with the mission of removing the installation and setting up its own. Following direct orders from Admiral Gastón A. Clement – an officer widely influenced by Admiral Isaac Francisco Rojas, who had been Vice President of the Nation – Zariategui landed personnel to dismantle the Chilean lighthouse, threw its remains into the sea and built one of his own at the highest point of the promontory (incidentally, this lighthouse was much more visible). Once the mission was accomplished, the Argentines withdrew knowing that their actions would have wide repercussions both in public opinion and the Chilean media and especially in its armed forces. It was a provocation and a real attack on the sovereignty of the country since the islet was not under discussion and until the military authorities of Santiago decided to set up the lighthouse, it had never been claimed.

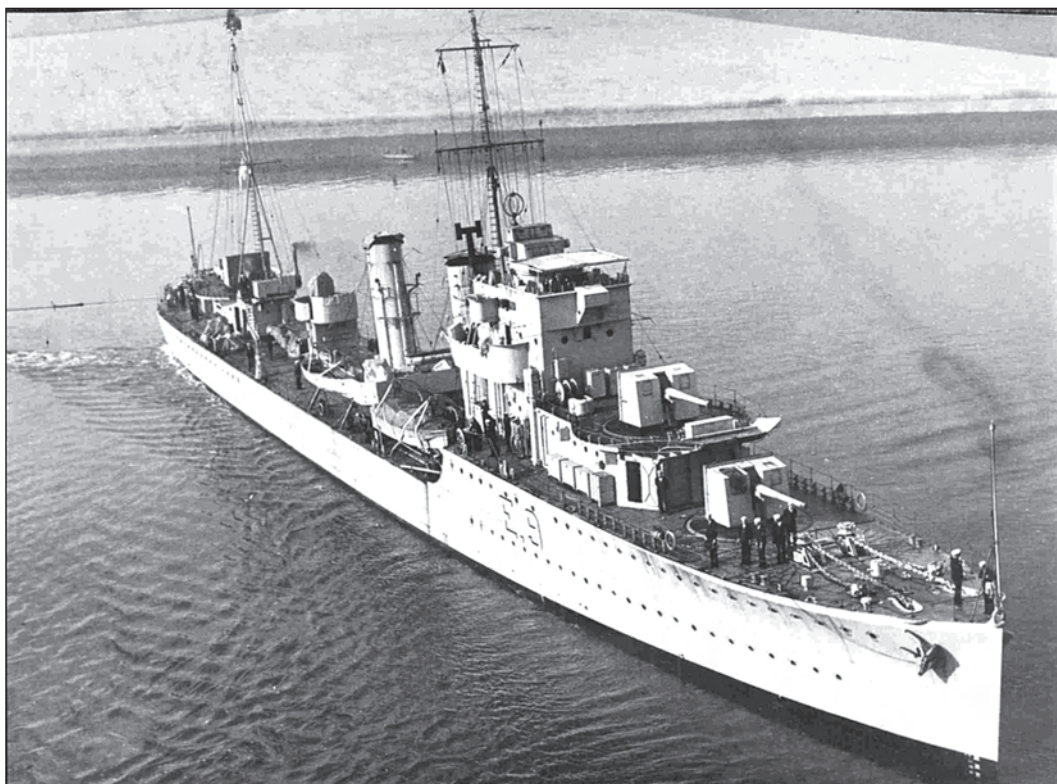
As a consequence, Corvette Captain Alsina Calderón was ordered to set sail immediately in order to dismantle the Argentine lighthouse and replace it with a new one – a mission to be carried out whatever resistance he might encounter, with permission to use force and weapons, if necessary. Foreseeing an armed confrontation,



The Chilean Navy patrol boat ACH *Lientur* (PP-60; left), and some effectives of the Chilean Navy Marine Corps Nr.4 Cochrane. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The Chilean Navy patrol boat ACH *Lientur* (left) and the Argentine Navy Frigate P-33 ARA *Sarandí* (right) in the Beagle Channel, near Snipe Islet zone in 1958. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The Argentine Navy destroyer ARA *San Juan* (D-9), deployed to the Snipe Islet zone in 1958 with 120 Marines. (Histarmar Archives)

the first thing Captain Alsina Calderón did was go to the Department of the Marine Corps Nr.4 Cochrane, based in Río de los Ciervos, to ask its commander for weapons and troops. Three Marine Infantry shooters were assigned to him along with six submachine guns and two boxes of hand grenades. The Captain also embarked a paramedic and medical supplies on the ACH *Lientur* and finally set sail at 9 p.m. on 11 May bound for Puerto Williams. It sailed in total darkness and radio silence, with its crew at their battle stations. That patrol boat had a 57mm bow gun and two 20mm Oerlikon anti-aircraft guns.

The ACH *Lientur* made a stop in Puerto Williams and on 21 May at 2:45 a.m. continued to Snipe, arriving at 4:50 a.m., when it was still dark. The ship dropped anchor and the personnel and armed marines were sent in two small boats to dismantle the Argentine lighthouse and erect a new one. No Argentine detachment was found and the only inhabitant was a Chilean aborigine. The job went smoothly and everyone returned to the patrol boat at 8:25 a.m. They

returned to Puerto Williams where they arrived at 10 a.m.

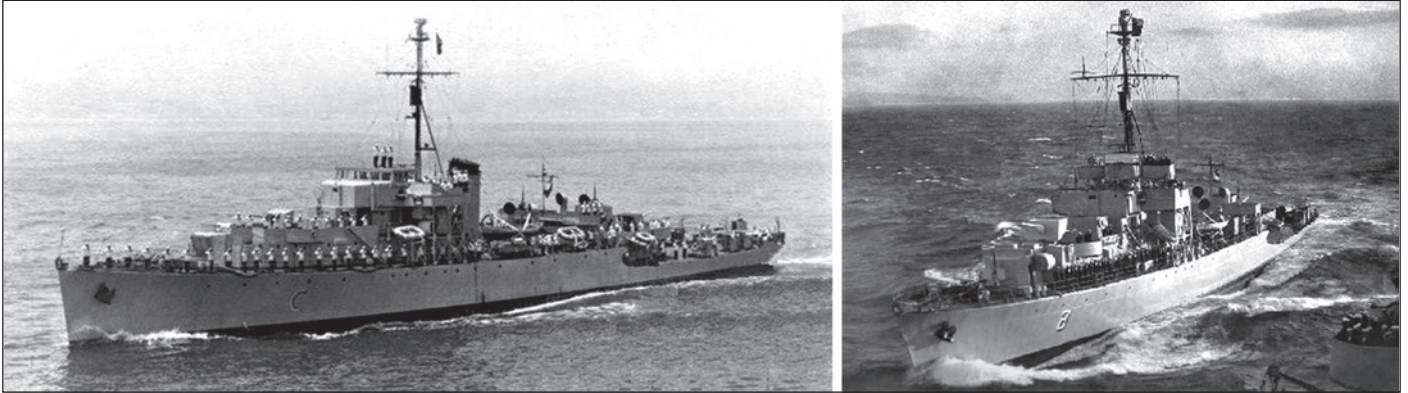
Three days later, the same patrol boat and crew returned to Snipe Islet with a diver to recover the remains of the first Chilean lighthouse. During the operation, three frigates of the Argentine Navy appeared in the McKinley Channel. Faced with this situation, Captain Alsina Calderón decided to remain on site. The Argentine frigates anchored 3,000 metres from the ACH *Lientur*. Faced with a possible attack, Captain Alsina Calderón ordered the crew to prepare for withdrawal, given the visible disadvantage he was in. But the Argentine frigates had no orders to attack, and at noon that day, they weighed anchor and passed very close to the Chilean patrol boat, exchanging friendly greetings. Once the danger was over, the remains of the first Chilean lighthouse were recovered and the ACH *Lientur* set sail for Puerto Williams. The Argentine naval officers had reported the presence of the Chilean ship to their superiors in Buenos Aires, requesting instructions, but had received no response. Admiral Rojas was not in the Argentine capital, but having been located, he ordered the Chilean ship to be sunk. When the order reached the frigates, they were no longer in the area. Had the attack been carried out, it would have been the first act of war between the two

countries.

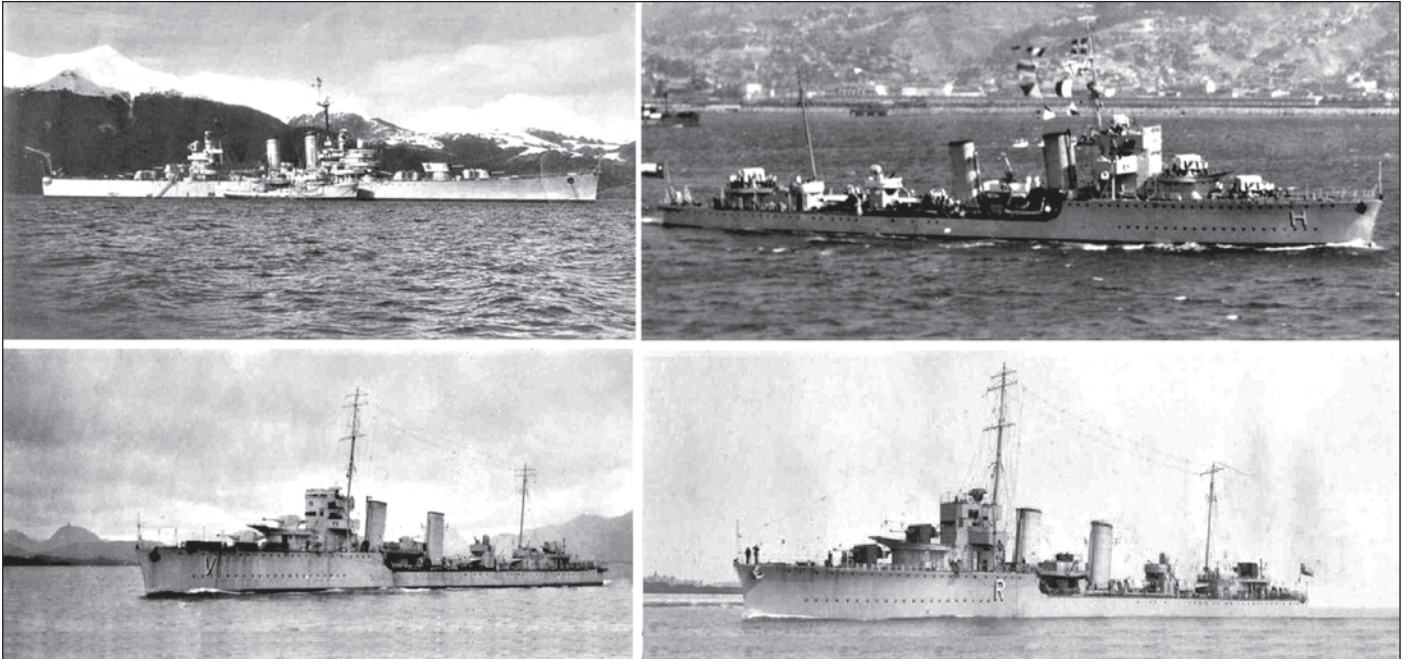
On Thursday, 15 May, barely two weeks after the inauguration of the new president, Dr Arturo Frondizi, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented a formal protest to the Naval Attaché of the Republic of Chile in Buenos Aires, Captain José Costa Francke, expressing the indignation that the presence of the trans-Andean ship had aroused in the naval high command, to which Costa Francke replied that the outraged party was the government of his country for the invasion of its territory.

The situation gradually settled down due to the fact that Argentina did not present any more claims and for that reason, on 8 June, the ACH *Lientur* returned to the islet to install a new lighthouse that, after rigorous work, was inaugurated the same day. But that was not the end of the story.

What the Chileans did not know was that on 9 August, the Argentine Navy had given orders to occupy the islet and destroy the new lighthouse, a mission entrusted to the torpedo boat/destroyer



The Chilean Navy frigates ACH *Covadonga* (left) and ACH *Baquedano* (right). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

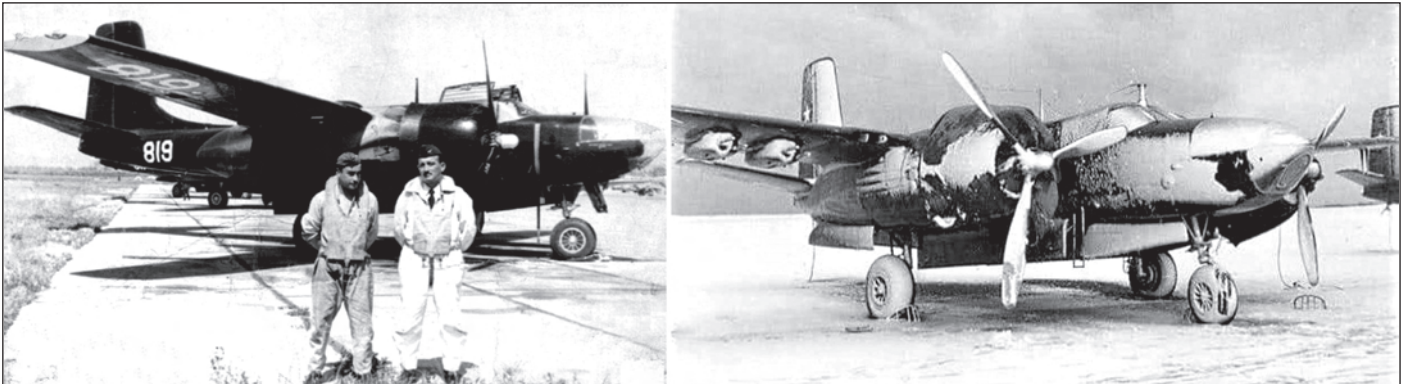


The Chilean navy fleet deployed to the Snipe Islet zone during the 1958 crisis with Argentina: cruiser ACH *Prat* (top left), and destroyers ACH *Hyatt* (top right), ACH *Videla* (bottom left) and ACH *Riquelme* (bottom right). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

T-9/D-9 ARA *San Juan*, which that same day, sailed from the Ushuaia Naval Base under the command of Frigate Captain Carlos Coda.

The Argentine destroyer moved through the channel at cruising speed and once in front of the promontory, aimed its guns and fired four salvos that completely destroyed the lighthouse. Immediately afterwards, they launched their boats into the sea and landed a Marine Infantry section made up of 120 heavily armed men, who took possession of the islet, raising the Argentine flag.

It was a tremendous provocation; an open declaration of hostilities that Chile could not ignore. The commotion in Chile had few limits, especially in the Chilean navy, but in the other armed forces as well. Now the situation got much more serious. There had been a military invasion of Chilean territory, so the Navy High Command, under the command of Vice Admiral Francisco O’Ryan Orrego, ordered the entire battle fleet to move south, ready to go into action, to recover the Snipe Islet. At the time, the only operational unit for mobile attack purposes of the Chilean forces was



A Chilean Air Force Douglas B-26C Invader bomber with its crew (left). There were freezing temperatures in August 1958 in Punta Arenas, where the B-26s were deployed. Note the underwing MG pods. (FACH)



Argentine Air Force Gloster Meteor F.Mk4 fighter (top left), Argentine Naval Aviation Vought F4U Corsair fighter (top right), Argentine Air Force Avro Lincoln (bottom left) and Avro Lancaster (bottom right) bombers. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

the Reinforced Marine Infantry Section, commanded by Marine Infantry First Lieutenant Pablo Wunderlich, who was stationed at Fort Rondizzoni, in Quiriquina Island, in front of Concepción Bay.

On 14 August 1958, Lieutenant Wunderlich received from the Command in Chief of the Second Naval Zone, the order to embark, fully armed, on the frigates ACH *Baquedano* and ACH *Covadonga*, disembark on the Snipe Islet and dislodge the Argentines. The section of 40 Marines commanded by Lieutenant Wunderlich had three 60mm mortars, nine Browning-Colt machine guns, six Z-B Brno machine guns, three flamethrowers and each Marine was armed with a Styer rifle. The unit boarded the ships and on that day began its journey south, reaching Puerto Alert, in the province of Última Esperanza (XII Section of Magallanes) on 16 August, where they joined the cruiser ACH *Prat* and the destroyers ACH *Hyatt*, ACH *Videla* and ACH *Riquelme*. Meanwhile, the FACH deployed Douglas B-26 Invader bombers to Punta Arenas.

While the Chilean naval squadron was being mobilised, the Foreign Minister of Chile presented a note of formal protest to the *chargé d'affaires* of the Argentinean Embassy in Santiago, Dr Ernesto Nogués, for the landing of Argentine armed troops on Snipe Islet, which was under Chilean sovereignty. The situation reached a peak when, on 14 August, Chile withdrew its ambassador from Buenos Aires, leaving the *chargé d'affaires* in his place, a clear sign that it left an open door for possible dialogue in favour of a peaceful solution.

Near simultaneously, on the islet, the Chilean Navy patrol boat ACH *Ortiz*, under the command of Lieutenant Rodolfo Calderón, made several approaches to the Argentine Destroyer ARA *San Juan* to deliver a note of protest from the Chilean government to its commander, but it was ignored. In that note, the Argentine destroyer was requested to leave the area and if it did not, it would be sunk by



The Chilean President General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1952–1958) (left) and the Argentine President Arturo Frondizi (1958–1962). (Public Domain)

the Chilean Navy squadron approaching the zone. On Monday, 11 August, the corvette ACH *Casma* left Puerto Montt bound for the south and the next day the patrol boat ACH *Leucotón* did the same from Punta Arenas to Puerto Williams.

When the ships of the Chilean squadron arrived nearby, they took up positions, ready to go into action. The situation of the Argentinean invaders was already unsustainable because of its inferior situation of facing a Chilean cruiser and three Chilean destroyers. There were diplomatic talks to delay for a time the Chilean counter-attack, which seemed imminent. Suddenly the Argentine marines re-embarked and the destroyer ARA *San Juan* quickly sailed back to its base, as if nothing had happened.

On Saturday, 16 August, within the framework of the feverish negotiations that took place between the two countries, it was learned that it was the wish of General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, President of Chile, to reach a direct understanding with his Argentine counterpart Arturo Frondizi, from whom he requested a concrete proposal that would lay the foundations of a settlement. Argentina had to withdraw its forces from the Snipe Islet and return to the pre-existing status quo. On the other hand, Chile undertook not to install lighthouses or beacons on the islet and the rights of possession of the islands in the area, including Picton, Lennox, Nueva and Snipe Islet itself, would be submitted to later negotiation.

Table 3: Chilean Air Force aircraft types in 1958¹

Aircraft type	Number of aircraft	Role
Republic P-47D Thunderbolt	12	Fighter
De Havilland D.H. 115 Vampire	5	Advanced trainer/fighter
Lockheed F-80C Shooting Star	10	Fighter
Douglas B-26B/C Invader	34	Bomber
Lockheed T-33A Silver Star	4	Advanced jet trainer
North American T-6 Texan	31	Advanced trainer
Beechcraft C-45/D18S	10	Light transport
Consolidated OA-10A Catalina	8	Sea patrol/SAR
Douglas DC-3/C-47 Skytrain	11	Transport
Grumman SA-16A Albatross	3	Sea Patrol/SAR
De Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver	4	Light transport
De Havilland Canada DHC-3 Otter	5	Light transport
Cessna 182 Skylane	3	Light transport/Liaison
Cessna O-1/L-19 Bird Dog	5	Light transport/Liaison
Beechcraft C50 Twin Bonanza	1	Light transport
Beechcraft L-23 Seminole	2	Light transport
Bell 47D-1	3	Utility helicopter
Sikorsky S-55 Chickasaw	4	Utility helicopter

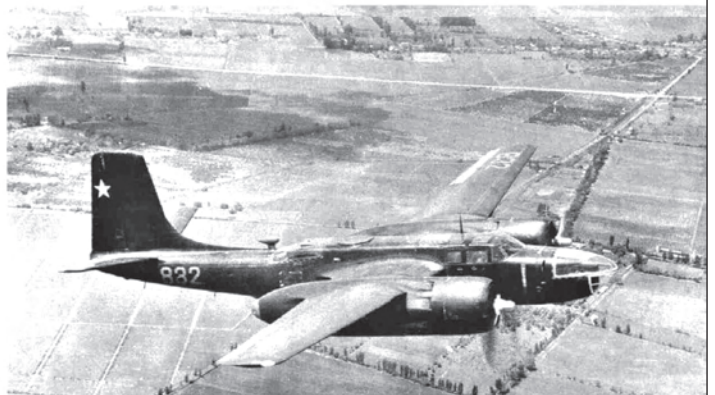
DC-4 aircraft with troops and ammunition in full combat gear, 2 PBV Catalinas, and about 12 Vought F4U Corsair fighters of the Argentine Naval Aviation service. Additionally, he reported that he had heard that Gloster Meteor F.Mk.4 fighters from the Argentine Air Force would arrive at any moment. In 1958, the Argentine Air Force had a strategic bomber fleet of 30 Avro Lincoln and 15 Avro Lancaster that would have caused huge damage to Chilean infrastructure. At the time, and to deal with any crisis, the FACH had the following aircraft types on strength (see Table 3 on the left),

In comparison, the Chilean Navy at the time had a low level of enlistment and operation. The battleship ACH *Almirante Latorre* had been decommissioned and sold for

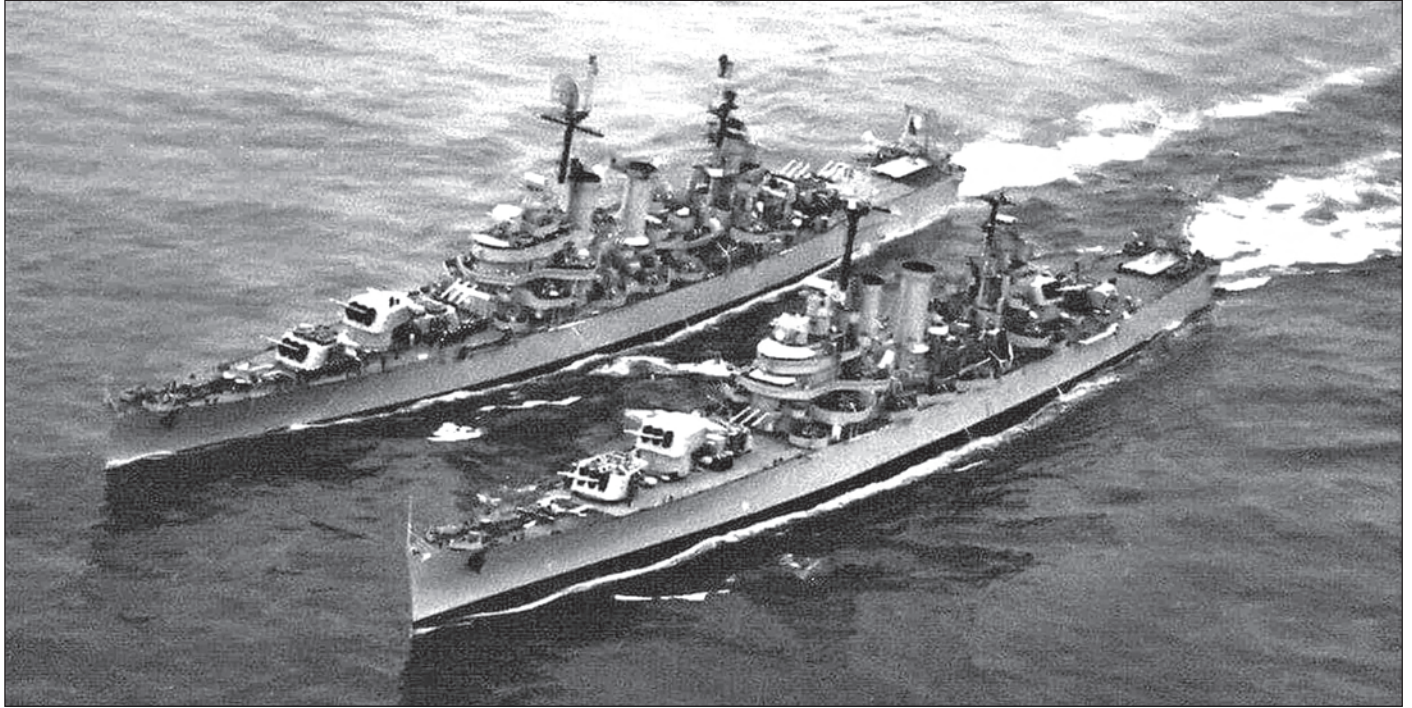
On 17 August, an agreement between the two countries was signed in which they committed to resolving the conflict peacefully, and agreed to maintain the existing situation until a definitive demarcation could be reached.

During this crisis, a LAN Chile airline pilot, who had landed in Rio Gallegos, reported having observed about 20 DC-3 and

scrap. The two *Brooklyn*-class light cruisers, ACH *Prat* and ACH *O'Higgins*, were both in need of repair. There were six *Serrano*-class destroyers, but only three of them, ACH *Hyatt*, ACH *Videla* and ACH *Riquelme*, were operational, the other three were in reserve in Talcahuano and awaiting repairs. The Navy also had three frigates of the *Iquique* type, all under repair. There were three operational



The FACH main combat types: Republic P-47D Thunderbolt (top left), Lockheed F-80C Shooting Star fighters (top right), De Havilland DH.115 Vampire (bottom left) two-seat conversion trainer with secondary combat capability, and Douglas B-26C Invader bomber (bottom right). (FACH)



The Chilean Navy two Brooklyn-class light cruisers, ACH Prat and ACH O'Higgins. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

corvettes but there were no submarines and the rest of the ships were auxiliary vessels without any combat capability.

In addition, the Chilean Army had called for mandatory military service in April 1958, but by August, those troops were not yet ready

for combat and in case of conflict, they would necessarily have had to resort to the mobilisation of reserve troops. Thus, Chile was not prepared for an armed conflict in 1958.

4

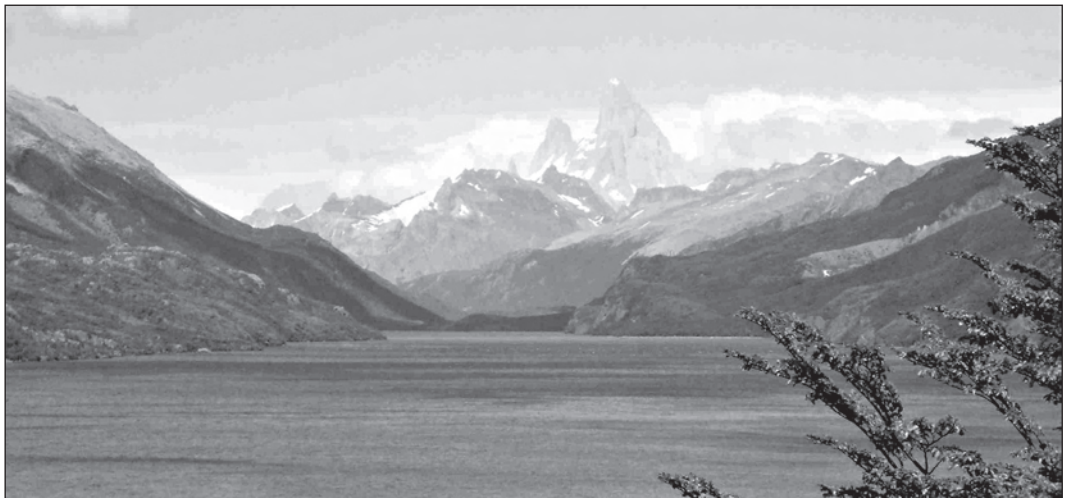
ESCALATION IN THE BORDER CRISIS, IN LAGUNA DEL DESIERTO

The Arbitration Award of 1902 stipulated that all the territory that extended to the southwest of Lake San Martín and to the west of the Juan Martínez de Rozas hill belonged to Chile, and for that reason, the 530 square kilometres where the Laguna del Desierto (Desert Lagoon) was located were under its jurisdiction.

On 28 February 1903, the British commissioner for the demarcation, Captain H. A. Crosthwaite, placed *Hito* 62 (border monolith 62) and drew a map of the region without question either side of it. One of the members of the demarcation commission was the Danish Andreas Madsen, who years later published a small book, *Hunting Pumas in Patagonia*, on whose maps he pointed to Laguna del Desierto being outside Argentine territory.

In 1921, the first Chilean settlers arrived, led by Vicente Ovando Vargas, who two years later discovered the Desert

Lagoon in a valley of incredible beauty and great resources in which numerous families of that origin began to settle to dedicate themselves to agricultural work and as ranchers. In 1929 Chile created the Province of Aysén and this increased the influx of settlers, so between 1934 and 1937 the Government of Chile began



The Laguna del Desierto zone. In the in the background Mount FitzRoy with a height of 3,405 metres (11,171 feet). (Public Domain)



The Chilean civil pilot Ernesto Hein Águila (left). Argentine Gendarmes with Mount FitzRoy in the background in the 1960s. (Public Domain)



A Chilean Carabineros patrol in the Laguna del Desierto area in 1965 (left). The O'Higgins Carabineros checkpoint in Laguna del Desierto (right). (Carabineros de Chile)



Chilean Carabinero Lieutenant Hernán Merino Correa. (Carabineros de Chile)

to grant property titles. New acts of sovereignty would take place in later years.

At the beginning of 1945, a Special Commission of the Civil Registry of Magallanes went to Laguna del Desierto to grant the

settlers identity documents; the same year the Ministry of Public Works ordered the explorer Juan Augusto Grosse to carry out a survey of the sector with a corresponding inventory and in 1947, the land surveyor of the Punta Arenas Land Office, Mr Fernando Fuentes, arrived to make measurements.

Everything went well until 1947, when a study commissioned by the Chilean Government to the United States Air Force modified the geographical knowledge of the area. Argentina took advantage of this opportunity to initiate a new claim based on studies and theories developed by the expert Francisco P. Moreno between 1896 and 1902. Moreno stated that the delineation between both countries should run on what he called the "main chain of the Andes".

The American survey had made it possible to determine that there was another mountain range to the west of the Juan Martínez de Rozas Hill (the Cordón Mariano); in territory that the Arbitral Award of 1902 had granted by common agreement to Chile, to the west of Laguna del Desierto, an argument that would be skilfully used by Buenos Aires.

Once the initial terms of the claim were outlined, the Government of Santiago stood firm in its position, arguing that the territory in question had been granted to Chile in an arbitration award accepted by mutual agreement by both countries and that it was populated by Chilean settlers with their respective property titles. Then the problems began when, at the end of 1949, a platoon of the Argentine Gendarmerie from Río Turbio entered the valley to notify its inhabitants that they should go to Río Gallegos to present their documents there and "regularise their situation," under the threat



An Argentine Air Force Douglas C-47 in the mid-1960s (left) (Horacio Gareiso). An incursion of Argentine gendarmes in the Laguna del Desierto area in 1965 (right) (Gendarmeria Nacional Argentina)

of confiscating their properties, but the area was in a region granted to Chile in 1902.

A few months later, the prefect of Punta Arenas, Lieutenant Colonel Luis Jaspard Da Fonseca, was able to verify in person the repeated appearances of Argentine soldiers in the area and even the overflight of military planes. The situation led him to write a detailed report to the Fifth Division of the Chilean Army, based on the observations made in Laguna del Desierto by a patrol headed by Lieutenant Tucapel Vallejos Reginatto, who established that there were no Chilean establishments in Argentine territory.

For more than a decade, calm reigned, with the settlers dedicated to their tasks and the Chilean regional radio station, Radio Minería, bringing information and music to the inhabitants and even acting as a link between them and the police station. The settlers even built an airstrip in the area allowing the Chilean civil pilot Ernesto Hein Águila's plane to land there, which served as mail transport and even as an air ambulance, evacuating the sick and injured. But this calm was not to continue.

In 1961, the Argentine gendarmes reappeared, coinciding with the inauguration of the Lake O'Higgins Chilean carabineros checkpoint. And in subsequent years, the gendarmes would continue to appear and threaten the residents that if they did not go to regularise their situation in Rio Gallegos, they would be forcibly evicted from the area.

When the carabineros were informed, they decided to send a corresponding notification to the government, and the government ordered a platoon to be sent to the



Laguna del Desierto incident (1965)

- ① First Step
- ② Command Post Installation
- ③ Place where Carabineros forward a man
- ④ 20th October 1965: Carabineros set up an outpost and raise the Chilean flag.
They arrested Argentine citizens.
6th November 1965, clashes with gendarmes.
- ⑤ Presence of approximately 50 carabineros.

Map of the Laguna del Desierto conflict zone in 1965. (Author)



Carabineros Lieutenant Hernán Merino Correa lies dead after the encounter with the Argentine gendarmes (left). Carabineros Sergeant Miguel Manríquez, seriously injured by the gendarmes (right). (Carabineros de Chile)

area to investigate. Major Miguel Reinaldo Torres Fernández, prefect of Coyhaique, was appointed to lead the group. He was to command a section of 11 soldiers, among whom were Lieutenant Hernán Merino Correa, Second Sergeant Miguel Manríquez Contreras, Corporal Víctor Meza Durán and the officers Julio Soto Jiménez and José Villagrán. The Chilean platoon set out on 11 October 1965, the same day news arrived that the Argentine Gendarmerie had acted violently towards a Chilean settler in the Valley of California, Alto Palena (another disputed region), something that further aggravated the situation.

It was evident that Argentina was carrying out more or less violent operations in the region and for that reason, it was necessary to reinforce border surveillance posts and put the Armed Forces on alert. Proof of this was the suspension of President Eduardo Frei Montalva's trip to Mendoza and his request for explanations about the aggressive attitude of the Argentine troops. There was no response, not even with the brief visit of Argentine Foreign Minister Zavala Ortiz, who was informed by his Chilean counterpart, Gabriel Valdés Subercaseaux, of La Moneda's discomfort. However, when Zavala Ortiz communicated the Chilean annoyance to President Illía, he ordered the immediate transfer of the lieutenant who led the Argentine patrol responsible for the Palena incident, a measure that was enough to change Santiago's frown and Frei Montalva finally travelled to Mendoza, where he was well received on 30 October.

The Chileans ignored the Argentine armed forces, encouraged by groups of nationalists, made up of both civilian and military elements, who exercised a marked influence over the weak president Arturo Illía. For this reason, Generals Osiris Villegas and Julio Alsogaray, Commander of the Fifth Army Division and General Director of the National Gendarmerie, respectively, issued instructions aimed at guaranteeing Argentine sovereignty in the territories of Alto Palena, Laguna del Desierto and the Beagle Channel, at the same time that the Foreign Ministry dispatched a note of protest because of the presence of carabineros in the second of those areas.

While this was happening, on 1 November 1965, the 'Buenos Aires' Squadron of the National Gendarmerie departed from El Palomar aboard two Argentine Air Force Douglas C-47 aircraft, with the mission of reinforcing the detachments of the province of Santa Cruz which were being mobilised. The aircraft landed in an open field in the middle of the mountains, and once on the ground, the men had to cross the mountain range on foot, carrying all of their supplies with them. Two days later, a second platoon of Squadron 43 of the Gendarmerie received instructions to set off from Río Turbio

in the direction of the lagoon. The operation was completed at 3:30 p.m. on 5 November, with both sections constituting the so-called 'Laguna del Desierto Squadron,' which began its movement the following day, in inauspicious weather and with insufficient supplies.

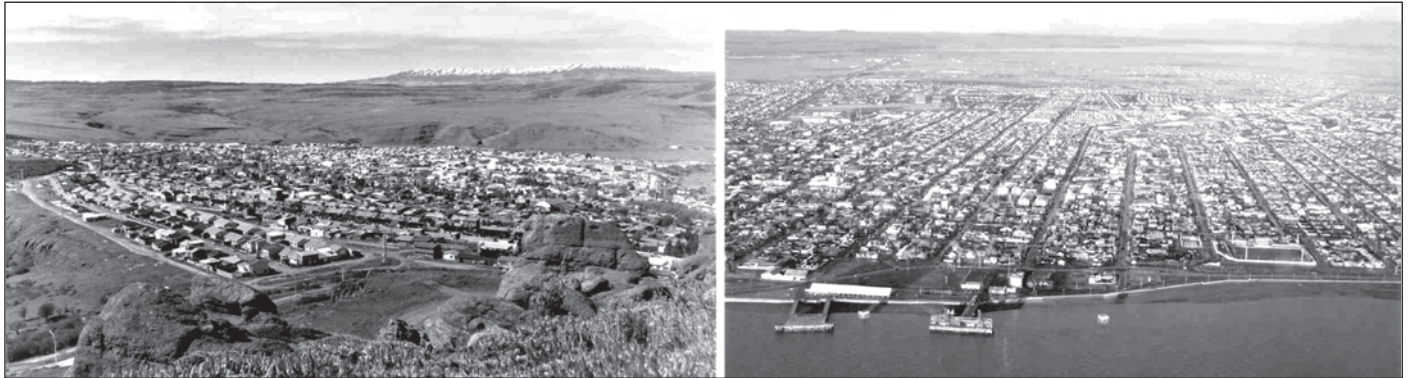
The advance began at dawn with the first light of day, in the direction of El Cóndor Lagoon, where the troops arrived around noon to set up a bivouac. It was then decided to divide the force, leaving the majority in the camp and sending out a patrol under the command of Lieutenant Luis Alberto Quinado, and composed of Lieutenant Eduardo Martín and 10 gendarmes. The patrol was moving west when it was spotted by Chilean civil pilot Hein Águila when he was flying over the region at the time. Hein also saw Argentine planes, probably the above mentioned C-47s, over the Lake O'Higgins checkpoint and for that reason he decided to go to Santiago to pass the news on to the authorities. In view of this, the Chilean Foreign Ministry hastened to adopt measures and the Minister of the Interior, Bernardo Leighton, put all units and the security forces on alert. The same day a new platoon of carabineros arrived in Laguna del Desierto headed by Captain Juan Bautista González and First Sergeant Héctor Carrillo, who proceeded to tour the sector in search of Argentine Gendarmes.

Meanwhile, in Santiago, the Government sent a note to its embassy in Buenos Aires, asking it to open negotiations with the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defence of that country in order to withdraw the forces that both nations had in the disputed territory. Ambassador Hernán Videla Lira agreed to the request, considering the matter over in a joint declaration that set a period of 48 hours for the withdrawal of the respective troops. But the same day an event took place that again could have triggered the war.

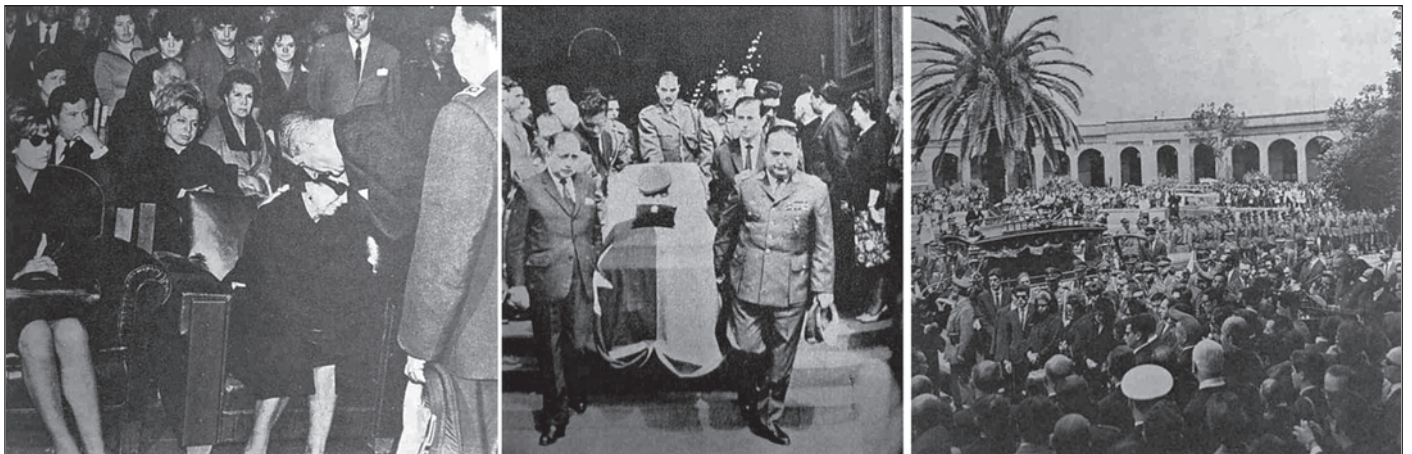
On 5 November, around 4:30 p.m., residents of the area spotted Argentine gendarmes, so they sounded the alarm at the local carabineros station. A patrol of five carabineros under the command of Major Miguel Torres, and including Lieutenant Hernán Merino Correa, 2nd Sergeant Miguel Manríquez and carabineros Soto and Villagrán went to the area. The approximately 90 men of the Argentine Gendarmerie immediately surrounded the few members of the carabineros, pointing their weapons at them. At around 7:50 p.m. the Chileans decided to talk but somewhat confused movements took place and the Argentines opened fire, shooting Lieutenant Hernán Merino Correa and seriously wounding Sergeant Miguel Manríquez, who, while trying to respond to the action, received at least two shots that left him lying on his back against a tree, his eyes wide open, watching their companions lay down their weapons. The



The Argentine gendarmes seized the Carabineros checkpoint in Laguna del Desierto and lowered the Chilean flag, which they carried as a trophy. (Gendarmería Nacional Argentina)



The Argentine cities of Rio Turbio (left) and Rio Gallegos (right) (Public Domain)



The President of Chile, Eduardo Frei Montalva, offers his condolences to the mother of Lieutenant Merino (left). Lieutenant Merino's coffin being taken out of the Cathedral of Santiago (centre). The crowd that attended the funeral of Lieutenant Merino, congregates in the General Cemetery of Santiago, where he was buried (right). (Carabineros de Chile)

Argentineans were surprised to see that none of their opponents had managed to fire and that they had quickly surrendered. Lieutenant Merino was dead.

While the National Gendarmerie paramedic sergeant Marco López proceeded to provide first aid to Merino and Manríquez, his companions were disarmed and taken prisoner, the carabinero station was occupied and the Chilean flag lowered, while any signs indicating that the facility belonged to the Republic of Chile were uprooted or demolished and thrown away.

The Argentineans took the prisoners at machine gun point to Río Turbio, among them the wounded Manríquez, and from there they were dispatched by plane to Río Gallegos to be housed in the cells of the 181 Combat Engineers Battalion, based in the city.

Once the Argentinean force had withdrawn, a large contingent of 700 heavily armed carabineros arrived in the area, with orders to

resist an Argentine invasion. Meanwhile, the funeral of Lieutenant Hernán Merino Correa was impressive. His remains, transported by air, arrived at the Cerrillos airport to be transferred from there to the capital, aboard a military vehicle. The funeral that was given to him was unparalleled, with the crowds gathering in front of his coffin in the chapel set up in the Carabineros School building and in the Santiago Cathedral, where the funeral took place. Merino was buried with full honours in the General Cemetery of Santiago, in the presence of National authorities headed by President Eduardo Frei himself.

Faced with this situation, a contingent of 600 well-armed marines from the BIM 41 Battalion and logistic materiel for 30 days were embarked on the LST ACH Águila bound for Puerto Williams, in the event that Argentina attempted any other armed actions in the south.

The Chilean press gave wide coverage to the tragic event and there were even demonstrations by the civilian population, but that was all. Despite the violation of its territory, discovered and populated by Chileans and subjected to arbitration, despite the fact that its flag had been lowered and its forces attacked, the Chilean Government issued only a lukewarm statement and to the astonishment of its own, and international, public opinion, agreed to withdraw its forces from the area.

Far from withdrawing and despite the agreements signed by both nations after the incident, while the carabineros evacuated the

area, the Argentine Gendarmerie erected three other outposts, even though it was still a disputed area.

Time passed and in 1994 the Territory of Laguna del Desierto, which by the 1902 Adjudication had been granted to Chile, was submitted to a new arbitration by a court of Latin American jurists that had been convened by Presidents Aylwin of Chile and Menem of Argentina. The Court ruled in favour of the latter country, Chile abided by the decision.

5

THE ALTO PALENA DISPUTE

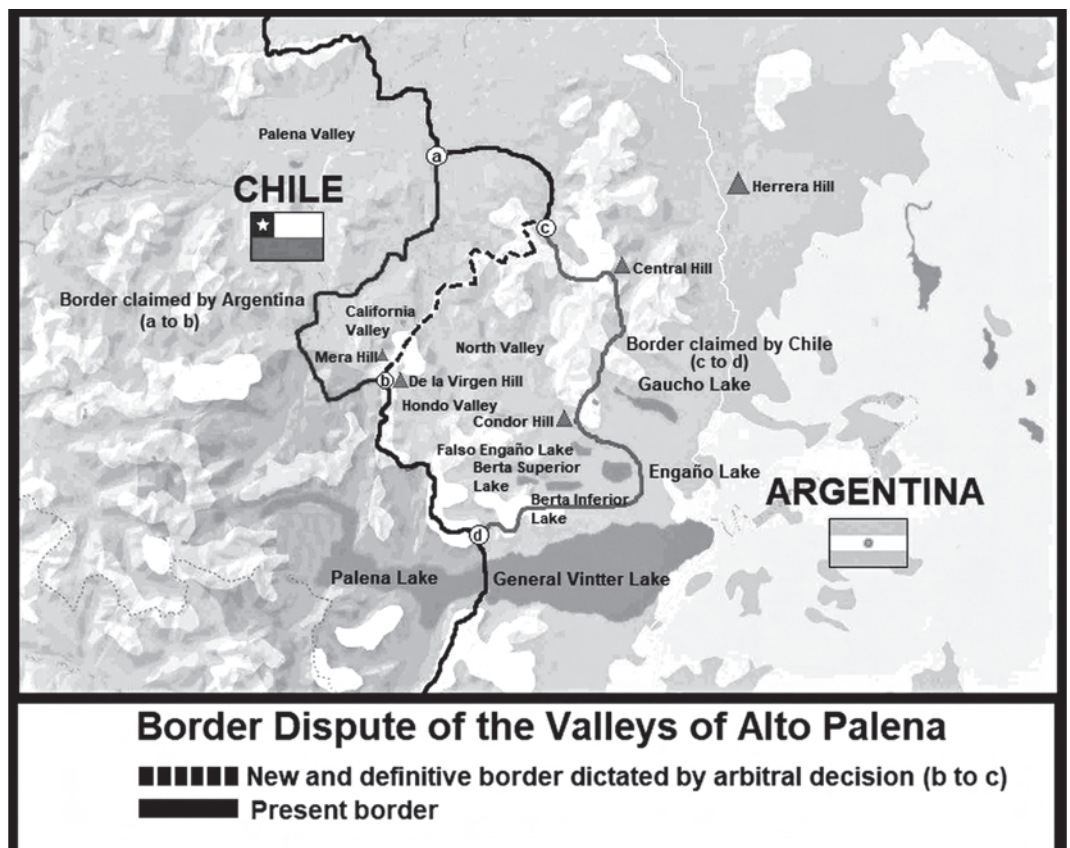
On 19 November 1902, the British Arbitration Court that heard the border dispute between Argentina and Chile, issued its final report, which in point 22 established that the four valleys of Alto Palena, in the 'X Region', at the height of the province of Chubut, with all their beauty and potential riches, belonged to Chile, an expected decision given that ever since the end of 1886, the region had been populated by settlers of that country, who on 4 January the following year founded the town of Palena and continued to settle throughout 1911 in an area of 15,000 hectares reaching a total of 94 residents who paid taxes to the treasury of their country.

Argentina had claimed the territory and, failing to reach an understanding with its trans-Andean counterpart, it was decided by mutual agreement, to submit the matter to an arbitral tribunal presided over by Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom. The court in question devoted itself to the detailed study of the matter, working for nine years. Finally, on 20 November 1902, it issued its verdict awarding the valleys in question to Chile.

In the following year, Captain Bertram Dickson, appointed by the court to mark off the border, placed monolith XVI at the confluence of the Palena and Encuentro rivers and monolith XVII on the shores of Lake General Paz, evidencing some difficulties in locating the second waterway. Given the difficulty in placing the Cerro de la Virgen cairn, His Majesty's officer indicated that it was the one located furthest to the east (Picacho de la Virgen) and the matter was concluded, with the corresponding reservation on the part of Argentina that argued that the real monolith XVII was a different one that was 20 kilometres further to the west, much lower and of lesser importance.

After consistently arguing over the matter, in 1945

Argentina and Chile formed the Mixed Boundary Commission, the Argentines managing to impose their opinion that the true Cerro de la Virgen was the small mountain located furthest to the west, renaming the previous mount as Cerro Central. The members of the Chilean commission meekly accepted these arguments and thus continued to work with their peers until 1952 when, during the government of General Perón, an Argentine Gendarmerie detachment commanded by auxiliary officer Domingo Cianis del Río suddenly burst into the Palena valley to order the Chilean settlers to proceed to regularise their situation within a month because, from that moment forward, the area was Argentine territory. They had to process identification cards and carry out their trademark registrations at the closest branch of the National Gendarmerie, being absolutely prohibited from removing belongings to Chile and crossing the border without proper authorisation.



The Alto Palena Valley dispute map. (Author)

A large-scale reaction from La Moneda was expected, but the Santiago Government limited itself to only raising an energetic protest through its ambassador in Buenos Aires, Germán Vergara Donoso, who, to his surprise, received a response from of his Argentine counterpart, Jerónimo Remorino, who claimed he had no knowledge of what was happening.

While Commander Cianis del Río was explaining in a conference the incursion that the Gendarmerie had carried out in Palena, the Santiago Government tried to keep the matter within normal lines, seeking a solution through diplomatic channels. For this reason, a delegation of parliamentarians was sent to the area escorted by a Carabineros squad; the objective was to talk with the gendarmes established there and try to make them understand that this was still a disputed territory, and thus their presence in the place was illegal. Such explanations were of no use, nor were the complaints formulated in Congress by Senator Exequiel González Madariaga, because the Argentineans ignored the suggestion and remained there without showing the slightest sign that they intended to vacate the area.

Meanwhile, the negotiations continued, although with a new caveat: Buenos Aires had managed to impose the confusion of the Cerro de la Virgen with the Picacho de la Virgen, achieving that in 1953 aerial photographic surveys were carried out from which they managed to get that position accepted.

After an energetic request from Chile, demanding a definitive solution to the question of the line of the border, the government of Perón presented a proposal in which it included the 50,000 hectares of the territory to be within its jurisdiction, something that in Santiago they practically took as a joke because the area had not only been awarded to them by the British arbitration decision of 1902, but also because it was insisted again with excessive ease, that the territory in question was Argentine, thereby implying that that line of the border was the only one that would be accepted. In addition, it was evident that the Chilean members of the Mixed Commission had been overwhelmed by their trans-Andean peers and had failed to resolve the situation.

Chile removed its staff from the commission and appointed Lieutenant Colonel Eduardo Saavedra Rojas to integrate it, that military engineer who had put forward in Rome the absurd thesis of the Arc of the Southern Antilles according to which the Pacific Ocean was introduced into the South Atlantic thousands of kilometres east of Cape Horn, following the contours that make up its southern islands.

On 4 August, the Argentine gendarmería entered Alto Palena again to reiterate to its inhabitants that they should “regularise” their situation. Fifteen days later, the second phase of the *Revolución*

Libertadora (Liberating Revolution) broke out in Argentina, overthrowing Perón and putting a new military regime in power. While Argentina was engaged in a brief but violent armed conflict, Saavedra Rojas managed to exhume the original maps of the Arbitral Award of 1902 from the archives of the Foreign Ministry, determining that the cartography presented by the Argentines had been tampered with. Cerro Central was the true Cerro de la Virgen and the Encuentro River converged directly towards it. When presented with these facts, the Argentines vigorously denied them, standing firm in their position and refusing to discuss any other alternative.

As of 1957, Argentine politics, as far as the border dispute was concerned, became more aggressive. In the area of Alto Palena, the conflicts between Chilean settlers and the posts that the Argentine Gendarmerie installed in the area worsened, and since the Chilean carabineros offered no resistance, the gendarmes silently “invaded” more and more of the disputed territory. The gendarmes continued to erect fences until they covered 6,000 hectares of the 15,000 that Argentina claimed and that made the situation much tenser. In view of this, on 30 October 1963, Chile proposed to submit the matter to the International Court in The Hague since it understood that since the British court had given its ruling in 1902, it was not appropriate to resubmit the matter to its discretion. The idea consisted of not altering the border established by the ruling and confirming it under the same conditions that the aforementioned court had done at the beginning of the century. Argentina flatly refused to agree.

On 3 November 1964 Eduardo Frei Montalva succeeded Jorge Alessandri as President of Chile and the first thing he did was to issue a joint statement with the Government of Buenos Aires committing himself to taking the Palena matter to a new British mediation, contemplating in one of its articles the possibility of direct arrangements between both parties. In reality, Argentine Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Zavala Ortiz had reached a secret agreement with the Chilean President and his Foreign Minister, Gabriel Valdés Subercaseaux, in which he also obtained Santiago’s support for the claims over the Malvinas Islands. By having to call a new Award requested by Argentina as arbitration, it had implicitly accepted the reformulation of the limit in this situation of occupation different from that of the 1902 Award.

On 9 December 1966, the Arbitral Tribunal of Her Britannic Majesty presented its final ruling, awarding to Argentina three of the four valleys that make up the Alto Palena, plus two of its rivers, a 420km² region of immense wealth and indescribable beauty that in 1902 had been granted to Chile. Argentina had taken another step towards the Pacific and had once again subdued its neighbour without resorting to arms.

6

DISPUTE OF THE PUNA DE ATACAMA

The dispute over the Puna de Atacama was a boundary crisis involving Argentina, Chile and Bolivia for control of the rich mining region located on the border between the three countries.

In April 1879, the Chilean Army occupied the region of San Pedro de Atacama, which Santiago claimed as part of its national territory. In 1884, the Truce Treaty was signed, which put an end to hostilities between Chile and Bolivia and forced the latter to cede its coastline. Santiago then created a new jurisdiction, entrusting

the geographer and engineer Alejandro Bertrand to measure it and draw a map of it.

A month later, on 4 May 1884, the Argentine Government sent a communication to its Chilean counterpart, notifying them that the territories they had occupied in the Puna during the Pacific War were under dispute between their country and Bolivia and that the exact borders were pending demarcation. Chile replied that Bolivia was the owner of those territories and that, since they were occupied

by its army, they were under its authority. Ignoring this kind of warning, at the beginning of 1885 Colonel Moisés Lozano, military commander of the Department of La Poma, in the province of Salta, occupied the Pastos Grandes area within the disputed region, and annexed it to the jurisdiction of his command. To that area, rich in borate and sulphur mines, others were added, one of them was the town of Catúa, plus the quarries of Casa del Diablo and the region of the Quevar volcano.

Given this action, Bolivia presented a formal protest to the Argentine Government stating that this area was a part of Bolivia. In view of this, Argentina ordered the evacuation of the area, as well as Antofagasta de la Sierra and the jurisdiction of Carachi Pampa, today the province of Catamarca, which were occupied by Chilean soldiers.

On 13 November 1886, the government of La Paz enacted a law that declared the Puno territories of Pastos Grandes, Antofagasta de la Sierra and Carachipampa, which were occupied by the Chilean Army, part of the Province of Sud Lipez, department of Potosí. However, on 2 August 1887, it had to suspend the law following the demands of the Santiago Government, which forced La Paz to sign a protocol that re-established the previous status quo. On 12 July 1888, Chile created the Province of Antofagasta, which encompassed all the lands south of the 23rd parallel, including the Puna de Atacama, in Salta and Catamarca.

Two years later, Argentina and Bolivia confirmed a secret agreement in Buenos Aires that was signed by the Argentine Foreign Minister, Norberto Quirno Costa, and the Bolivian envoy, Santiago Vaca Guzmán. This stipulated that Argentina renounced its claims over the disputed territory of Tarija in exchange for the cession by Bolivia of the Puna de Atacama. Bolivia ceded a large area that extended from the Quebrada del Diablo northwards along the eastern slope of the Andes, this, however, remained unratified until 1893. When Chile became aware of this, it flatly rejected the terms, arguing that the region was under military occupation and, according to the clauses of the 1887 protocol, this denied Bolivia the right to agree about its ownership.

With the speed and sagacity typical of the Argentine diplomacy of those years, Buenos Aires argued that the Truce Agreement of 1884 did not mention the Puna and that the Chilean law creating the Department of Antofagasta in 1888 had no international basis. To counter such arguments, on 18 May 1885, Chile and Bolivia had signed the Barros Borgoño-Gutiérrez Treaty by which the former undertook to cede Tacna and Arica to Bolivia in exchange for recognition of Chilean sovereignty over the Puna de Atacama and, in case of not reaching an agreement, hand over a port on the

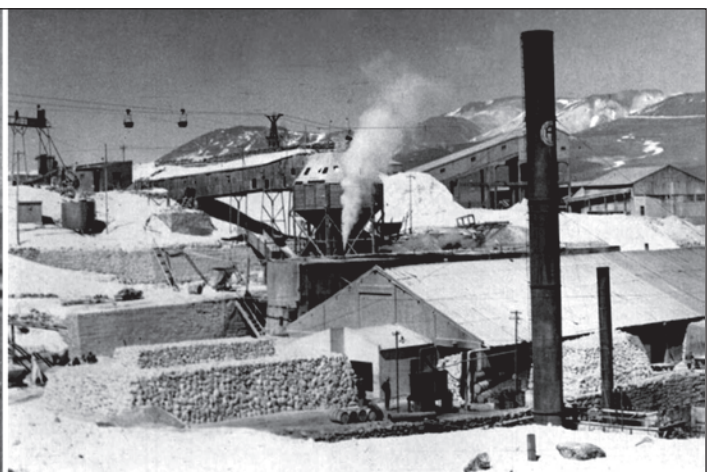


William Insko Buchanan (1853–1909), United States diplomat who served as extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary minister of his country in Argentina from January 1894 to July 1899, actively participating in and unblocking the border conflict of the Puna de Atacama litigation between Argentina, Chile and Bolivia (Public Domain)

maritime coast in Caleta Vitor, an important advance for the winners of the Pacific War. Seven months later, the two countries signed the Marra-Cano Protocol, which extended the deadline for delivery of a port to Bolivia for two years, an initiative that led politicians in Buenos Aires to sign a new protocol with Bolivia, the Rocha-Cano Pact, which is why Chile continued its position of keeping the region occupied with its military forces.

In the days that followed those events, Buenos Aires managed to get its neighbour to agree to submit the border issues to British arbitration, with the exception of the Puna, which it only agreed on 2 November 1898 to submit for discussion at a meeting held in the Argentine capital. According to the documents signed that day, in case of a disagreement, the delegates of both countries would set the borders together with Mr William Insko Buchanan, United States Plenipotentiary Minister to Argentina, acting as arbitrator.

The assembly took place between 1 and 9 March and was attended by representatives of both nations; highlighting, on the Argentine side, Bartolomé Mitre, Bernardo de Irigoyen, José Evaristo Uriburu, Benjamín Victorica and Juan José Romero, and on the Chilean side Enrique MacIver, Eulogio Altamirano, Eduardo Matte, Luis Pereira



Salta Sulphur Plant (Establecimiento Azufrero de Salta) Facilities. (Public Domain)



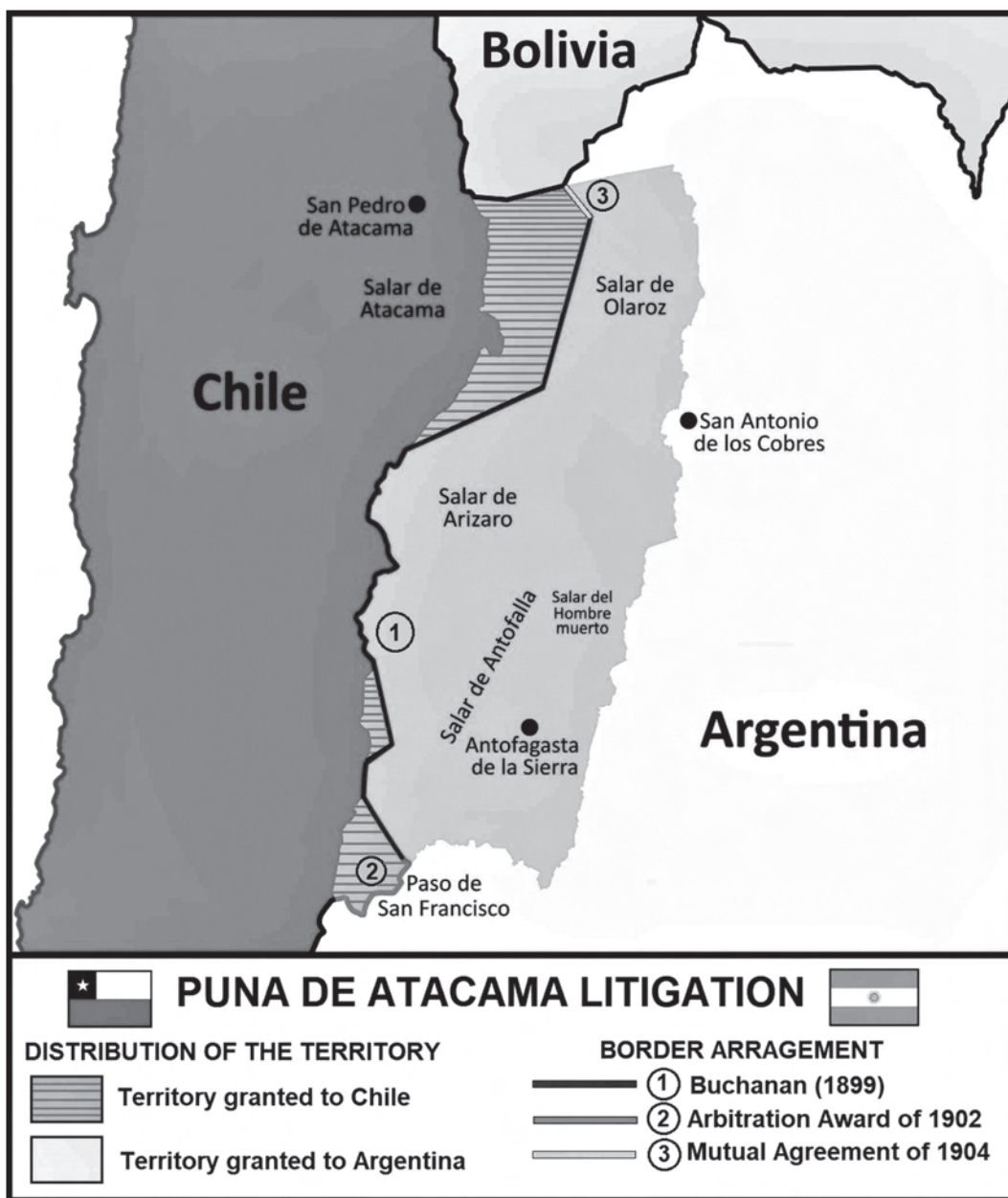
The impressive beauty of the Puna de Atacama region. (Public Domain)

and Julio Zegers, in addition to the American diplomat. At the assembly, both parties presented their positions and since there was no agreement, it was decided to hold a new series of meetings between the 21 and 24 of the same month, which were only attended by Buchanan, Uriburu and McIver. As a result of that meeting, of 80,000km² of disputed territory, Chile ceded 68,000km² to Argentina, having to evacuate its troops immediately, an unprecedented case if one takes into account that it had occupied that region militarily during a war against a nation that ceded its rights and claims to a third party. Just 12,000km² of the Puna de Atacama were left for Chile.

Barely half a century after Chile handed over the Puna, conquered by its forces during the Pacific War, the Argentineans began a new infiltration with the intention of seizing the sulphur deposits of the Corrida de Cori mountain range, south of the Chilean Puna, in order to exploit the resources for the production of explosives.

It all started when the Argentine citizen Adolfo F. García Pinto processed before the Court of Taltal in Chile the property of a sulphur mine on Julia hill, of which he had lost his rights due to some difficulties that arose when processing the documentation. However, the following year he managed the property again, surveying it in 1944 and registering it a year later. For not having paid the taxes due on the mines, the property was lost again, confiscated by the court in question, which declared it fiscal property.

Shortly after these events, the Perón government decided to undertake the exploitation of sulphur to supply it for military



Map of The Puna de Atacama region. (Author)

fabrications, ordering the company Establecimiento Azufrero de Salta, dependent on the Ministry of Defence, to occupy the mines which, in this way, would remain under the control of Industrias Químicas Nacionales de Sociedad Mixta company, founded in 1943.

A short time later, the Argentines entered Chilean territory to begin the exploitation of the deposits located to the south of the Salar de Atacama, whose product began to be extracted and transported in trucks to the Estafeta de la Casualidad plant, 23 kilometres from

the border and within the Salta territory. It was an open and brazen invasion since the sulphur began to be transported to Córdoba, more precisely to what would be the plant of the Military Factory of Río Tercero and the Military Factory of Gunpowder and Explosives in Villa María, for the manufacture of weapons and explosives.

The indignation that this discovery provoked in Chile was almost unimaginable since Perón had not only appropriated Chilean ore, but also used it to arm the same arsenals with which he planned to pursue his frustrated access to the Pacific. A thousand men worked in the sulphur mine, under the watchful eye of Argentine military personnel, while the company continued to pay its annuity to the Talca Treasury by which it covered up the facts of what was happening.

In 1954 Danko Zložilo Pavlicevic, a Croatian citizen who had been living in Chile for several decades, discovered that the Argentines were clandestinely extracting gold from their Pico de Oro deposits and tried to talk to them about it. However, as he approached the camp they had built around the rise, he was surrounded by heavily armed men and forced to retreat under serious threats. Zložilo denounced the fact to the Chilean authorities and initiated a lawsuit through the mining company against the Argentinean Government, having to file another lawsuit the following year, in 1955, when the Perón government began to falter. With the *Revolucion Libertadora* victorious, Perón was no longer in power in Argentina, so Zložilo and the Chilean government saw hopes flourish for an agreement and

also for compensation from their neighbouring country. However, as the new authorities showed no signs of making a decision, in 1956 the Danko Zložilo Pavlicevic went to the Taltal Customs to present a new claim, but only in February 1957 did it receive a response.

An officer of the Chilean Army, Major Enrique Gillmore, went to the region to verify if it was true that there were Argentines in the area. His trip had positive results, but the most serious thing was that when he wanted to speak with the officer in charge of the trans-Andean uniformed guarding the area, Lieutenant Colonel Ricardo Zorzi, he was treated with extreme violence, until he was forced to leave the place.

In view of what had happened, the Chilean Ministry of Defence sent a carabinero detachment to the sector in order to try to normalise the situation. The Chileans arrived heavily armed and determined to engage in combat if necessary, but nothing happened because, according to their version, the Argentines withdrew peacefully, after reaching an understanding. However, curiously, the carabineros left the area and the Argentines returned (in reality they never left), remaining in there until 1964! – ignoring the complaints made in Congress and the protests made by the House of Representatives and La Casa de la Moneda.

The truth was that, after 15 years of exploitation, the summit of Corrida de Cori had practically disappeared after the Argentines had extracted more than a million tons of sulphur from there without ever compensating Chile for the damage or loss.

7

MORE BORDER INCIDENTS CAUSED BY ARGENTINA

The incidents of the Atacama sulphur mines, Snipe Islet, Laguna del Desierto and Alto Palena, described in previous chapters, were followed by other serious events.

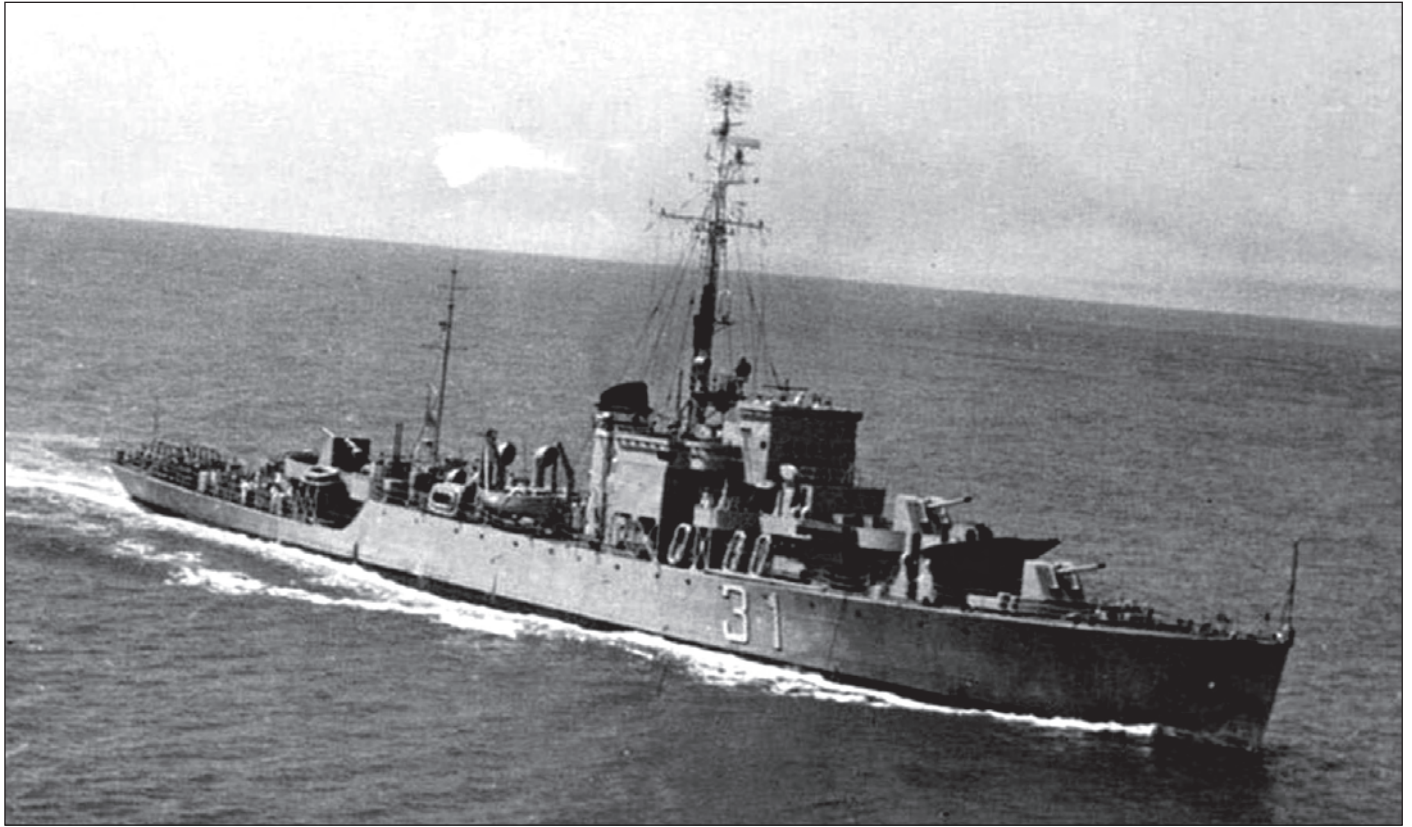
With the arrival of the engineer Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez to power in Chile, on 3 November 1958, Argentine gendarmes made a new entry in Palena that once again raised tensions between the two countries. On 2 February 1959, when the news was known, President Frondizi, who was on his way to the United States, expressed his agreement to withdrawing his troops from the sector, understanding that it was a 'territory in dispute,' and that same day signing the Declaration of Cerrillos, with which they undertook to 'immediately enter into negotiations aimed at finding the appropriate arbitration formulas, which allow the existing disputes

to be resolved,' namely, Laguna del Desierto, Alto Palena and the Beagle Channel.¹

The matter seemed over, so President Alessandri appointed Dr Sergio Gutiérrez Olivos as Ambassador to Argentina. Once in Buenos Aires, Gutiérrez Olivos asked the Argentine Government to withdraw the gendarmes from Palena, the only condition to the start of talks about the possibility of arbitration. In response, he received angry complaints about the alleged violation of Argentine airspace carried out by two Chilean warplanes on 23 February 1959, a piece of news that took him by surprise. As soon as he called Santiago to find out about this matter, he was informed that no FACH aircraft had flown that day and that the claim was nothing more than a diversionary manoeuvre to delay the troops' withdrawal.



The Chilean Navy patrol boat ACH Ortíz (left) and the hydrographic vessel ARA Sanaviron (RHF.2) of the Argentine Navy (right). (Histarmar Archives)



The Argentine Navy frigate ARA *Hércules* (P-31). (Histarmar Archives)

In view of this, on 31 March, Gutiérrez insisted again on the withdrawal and presented the draft of an agreement that the Government of Buenos Aires promised to study, delaying the answer indefinitely. Meanwhile, in the south, a series of incidents were taking place that put both nations on alert.

On 16 August, an Argentine oil tanker anchored at Isla Nueva, and remained there until the arrival of patrol boat ACH *Ortiz*, of the Chilean Navy. Three days later the Hydrographic Vessel RHF.2 ARA *Sanaviron* of the Argentine Navy did the same, dropping anchor in Banner Cove, on the north coast of Picton Island, where it remained anchored for more than 24 hours.

On 31 August, the Argentinean embassy in Santiago filed a formal protest, alleging that the *Ortiz*'s actions constituted an act of provocation. While the Chilean Foreign Ministry read the complaint, the Argentine Frigate P.31 ARA *Hércules* defiantly sailed through the waters of the Beagle Channel, anchoring in Banner Cove, as the ARA *Sanaviron* had done.

On 12 June 1960, both governments signed the Gutiérrez-Taboada Protocols of Arbitration Bases aimed at resolving the border conflicts of the Beagle Channel and Alto Palena through a new British court by which the criteria demanded by Argentina were accepted from the ruling of 1902. It was really incredible because it was legislating again on what was *res judicata*.² The protocols established that all the islands north of the main Beagle Channel belong to Argentina and those to the south belong to Chile. Lennox Island was to be Chilean and the two Becasses Islands Argentinean – another Argentine diplomatic triumph which led to a new wave of protests in Chile. Rear Admiral (Ret.) Pedro Espina Ritchie of the Chilean Navy stated that,

The current Arbitration Protocols and Navigation Agreement of June 1960 show us that Chile continues with its “surrender” international policy and Argentina, on the contrary, continues with its policy of “territorial expansion” towards the South and towards the Pacific in an implacable way. These protocols are



The Chilean Navy torpedo boat PTF-82 ACH *Quidora* (left). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile). An Argentine Naval Aviation North American T-28P Fennec armed with MG pods (right). (Aviación Naval Argentina)

contrary to the interests and sovereignty of Chile and the Navigation Agreement, and moreover, subjects our country... to a dishonourable servitude that undermines national dignity.³

At the beginning of 1965, these protocols were withdrawn from Congress by President Frei Montalva. Some years later, between February and March 1970, a new episode took place in Chilean territory that once again put both nations into a state of war.

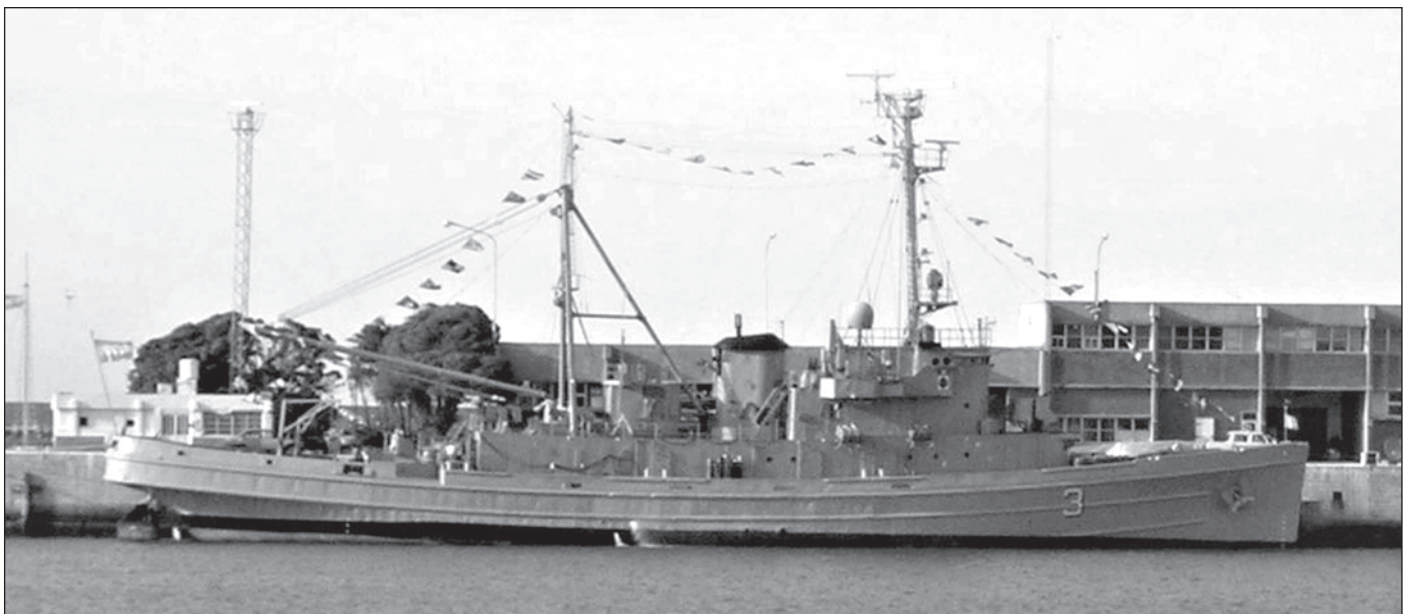
Shortly after the meeting that took place between Presidents Onganía and Frei, Argentine gendarmes from Chos Malal entered Chilean territory through Paso Valdez, pursuing a gang of rustlers. Already in the jurisdiction of the neighbouring country, the troops ran into a group of farmers whom they mistook for criminals and shot at them at close range, killing Antonio Parra, one of the farmers, and taking his companion prisoner, whom they handcuffed and led back to Argentine territory. The Chilean Foreign Ministry issued only a lukewarm, mild statement and therefore the incidents continued, becoming increasingly serious.

Another serious incident took place on 28 November 1967. The Chilean torpedo boat PTF-82 ACH *Quidora*, commanded by First Lieutenant Leonardo Prieto Vial, en route between Puerto Williams and Caleta Wulaia, while in Chilean waters, was flown over at low altitude by two Argentine Naval Aviation North American T-28

Fennec, which fired bursts from their machine guns a few dozen metres across the bow of the Chilean vessel. Although the crew of the *Quidora* prepared to return the fire, the Argentine planes left the area. The Argentine pilots reported that the Chilean PT boat had entered Argentine territorial waters in the Bay of Ushuaia. On the return trip, the *Quidora* was attacked by the Argentine patrol boat A-1 ARA *Comandante General Irigoyen*, in the Ushuaia area. The commander of the Argentine ship was Lieutenant Commander Carlos L. Irigoyen. The Chilean torpedo boat did not return fire and



The Argentine Navy patrol boat ARA *Comandante General Irigoyen* (A-1). (Histarmar Archives)



The Argentine Navy tugboat ARA *Francisco de Gurruchaga* (A-3). (Histarmar Archives)

continued on its way. The Chilean government gave an explanations of the case, and the commander of the PT boat was removed from command, but the response of the Argentine President General Onganía was very harsh, stating that he would not tolerate any act of provocation claiming that the boat had entered their waters, and that the next time he would withdraw his ambassador in Chile and would order the forcible eviction of the Chilean inhabitants of the Lennox, Picton and Nueva islands.

Five years later, on 28 March 1982, at a time when the Argentinean fleet was sailing towards the Malvinas Islands (Falklands Islands) to start Operation Rosario, three Chilean ranchers, the brothers Germán and Feliador Sáez and their friend César Huaquier, were walking around the Galera hill, in front of Coyhaique, checking the quality of the pasture of some land that they planned to rent to raise cattle on, not suspecting the tragedy that was about to unfold. The ranchers were engaged in their task when six Argentine gendarmes, who had crossed the border and were going through the area heavily armed, opened fire on them. German Sáez fell dead while his brother and César Huaquier fled, to save their lives. They returned two days later to retrieve the body of their partner who had been shot in the head.

8

THE CRISIS BREAKS OUT

In 1970, Chile and Argentina agreed to submit the dispute to arbitration by the United Kingdom Government on the condition that it was an arbitral tribunal made up of five international experts, appointed by both Chile and Argentina, who presented the proposal to the British Government, which would finally approve or reject the arbitration proposal, but without modifying it. On 22 July 1971, Presidents Salvador Allende of Chile and Lieutenant General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse of Argentina signed the Arbitration Commitment between the two countries in the city of Salta.

The commission of five jurists was made up of Hardy Dillar (United States), Gerald Fitzmaurice (United Kingdom), André Gros (France), Charles Onyeama (Nigeria) and Sture Petren (Sweden). They had begun their work in July 1971, with the intervention of Queen Elizabeth II being only for protocol. The representatives of the two countries requesting the arbitration were José Miguel Barros from Chile, who was later replaced by Álvaro Bunster, and Ernesto de la Guardia from Argentina.

The decision, called 'the Arbitration Award of 1977', was the result of an exhaustive analysis by the arbitral tribunal of the legal rights of both countries over the area in conflict and within the framework of international law and current treaties. For that, both countries were able to present all their arguments and documents that, according to their interpretation, ensured their rights over the area and then defend their respective arguments before the judges.

Its preparation and implementation was carried out by a consensus between both countries, with the express Argentine condition of discarding any advantage for the Chilean position as a result of the Argentine-British dispute over the Falklands/Malvinas Islands. Its fulfilment was obligatory and was entrusted to the honour of the nations. The arbitral tribunal drew up the final ruling on 18 February 1977 and presented it to Queen Elizabeth II. The British Monarch sanctioned the document on 18 April and on 2 May both countries were notified of the decision, which according

That was not all; the same month, shortly before the start of the Falklands War, the Argentine Navy tugboat ARA *Francisco de Gurruchaga*, anchored on Deceit Island, which had been under Chilean sovereignty since 1881, and remained there, ignoring the demands of the Chilean naval authorities, to leave the area immediately.

In April 1993, a new group of gendarmes penetrated Lake Cochrane, in Chilean territory, and near its shore killed two other residents, returning to Santa Cruz along the same route by which they had arrived. To the astonishment of his own population, Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma lowered the decibels of the incident and tried to keep the matter hidden, in order not to stir up emotions, which, of course, he failed to achieve.

There were new protest demonstrations, as well as new claims, and the newspapers of both countries gave wide coverage to the issue. In 1994, a similar incident would be repeated in Reigolil, Curarrehue and so on, with no break in the continuity of the incidents until the definitive loss of Laguna del Desierto that same year and the agreement on the Continental Ice Fields in 1998, which left both of those territories in the hands of Argentina.



Argentine President Lieutenant General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse with Chilean President Dr Salvador Allende during a meeting in Salta in 1971. (Public Domain)

to the 1902 Treaty, was final and unappealable. The Arbitration Award ruled that,

The Picton, Nueva and Lennox islands as well as the adjacent islets would belong to Chile.

When the Limits Treaty of 1881 gave Argentina a coast in the Beagle Channel, international law automatically granted it maritime rights over the channel, ruling out the theory of the dry coast. Pursuant to the foregoing, the court drew the boundary within the canal in such a way that both would have free navigation to their ports in the canal. In particular, within the channel, Snipe Islet was granted to Chile and Gable Island and the Becasses Islands were granted to Argentina.

The maritime limit was the dotted line equidistant from the closest Chilean and Argentine coasts. (Approximately one line



Cover of the most important newspaper in Chile, *El Mercurio*, whose main headline reads: 'Historical Arbitration Award of the Beagle'. The entire front page was dedicated to the Award in favour of Chile. (Public Domain)

from the eastern exit of the Beagle Channel in a south-easterly direction.)

In addition, it was recognised that all acts of sovereignty that had been carried out in that area by Chileans from 1881 onwards were valid and in accordance with the law. According to the provisions of one of the clauses of the award, a period of six months was granted to comply with the resolution.

Chile accepted the decision, and turned it into Chilean law: it promulgated the Decrees of Border Lines and appointed mayors of the sea. The news caused rejoicing in government circles and Chilean public opinion since that was what was expected since, both in 1881 and 1902, Argentina had recognised those territories as part of Chile in exchange for its total control over Patagonia and half

of Tierra del Fuego. In addition, the resolution of an arbitration tribunal was law and, therefore, it was a closed case, however, the government, and the population in general, were far away from imagining what was happening on the other side of the mountain range. The absolute silence that followed the court statement was the first indication that things were not going well.

On 25 January 1978, Argentine Foreign Minister, Vice Admiral Oscar Antonio Montes, announced, in a press conference, that Argentina had declared the decision of the Arbitral Court irrevocably null and void because of distortion of the Argentine arguments, the abuse of the prerogative of the court, logical contradictions, errors of interpretation, geographical and historical errors and the Court's partiality. It was also considered illegal under Argentine law because it had been requested by a de facto¹ government, because the request had not been approved by Congress, and because the decision had been prepared by the British Monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. In fact, the Queen had appointed a council to advise her.

In accordance with the provisions of the agreement, the arbitration tribunal dissolved itself after communicating its decision to the parties and verifying that its decision had been fulfilled: all the islands in dispute were under the de facto sovereignty of the respective

country to which they had been granted.

Foreseeing the Argentine Government's negative reaction to the outcome of the arbitration ruling, Admiral López, Commander of the Chilean Naval Squad (*Escuadra Naval Chilena*), organised a task force called 'Operation Lightning' to go the disputed islands. This group was made up of the LSMs ACH *Elicura* and ACH *Orompello*, the polar boat ACH *Piloto Pardo* and the transport ACH *Aguiles*, which transported 250 marines from the Cochrane Nr.4 Regiment. Their orders were to repel any Argentine attempt to take the islands. In addition, 90 carabineros were sent to the area by air. All this was done between 21 April and 10 May 1977. In June of that year, the Chilean Navy destroyer ACH *Zenteno* was anchored in the Wollaston Islands, south of Navarino, when it was flown over by an Argentinean military aircraft. Its commander ordered



EL LAUDO ES NULO

Edición de 16 páginas, para Capital y Gran Buenos Aires
Precio de este ejemplar: \$ 100.—. De largo vía aérea: \$ 25.—
Domingo de la Mañana

Clarín X

En un mensaje dirigido a la opinión pública nacional e internacional, el canciller manifestó la decisión del gobierno "de adoptar todas las medidas para la defensa de los planos derechos en la zona hasta el Cabo de Hornos", reafirmando la soberanía argentina sobre toda la región en litigio. Previamente habían sido convocados al Palacio San Martín los embajadores de Chile y Gran Bretaña para notificarles la decisión argentina, mediante la entrega de un documento titulado: "Nullidad del Laudo". En tanto, trascendió que los presidentes Videla y Pinochet volverán a reunirse dentro de 10 días en Chile. (Información págs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 y 42.)

HAZANA DE INDEPENDIENTE
Con 8 hombres se clasificó campeón

PERIODICAMENTE EN LAS PAGINAS 34, 35, 36 Y 37

Cover of the *Clarín* newspaper of Buenos Aires, which dedicated half a page to the Argentine position in relation to the arbitration award of the Beagle. The main title says: The Award is Null. (Public Domain)



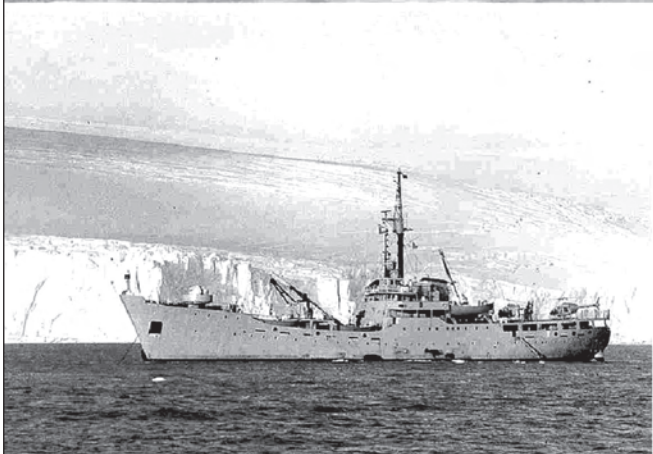
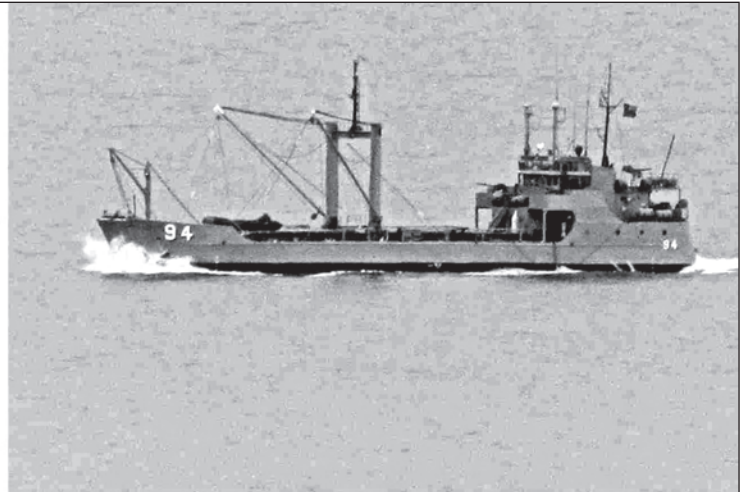
Chilean Navy Captain IM Pablo Wunderlich, Commander of the Marine Brigade deployed to the South (left). Marine Regiment Nr.4 Cochrane effectives during exercises in the Beagle region. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

his ship to open fire since the aircraft had violated Chilean airspace and the Argentinean aircraft quickly left the area, heading north.

More troops from the Chilean marine infantry corps arrived in the area, occupying positions on Deceit, Freycejinet and Hornos islands first, and then on Picton, Lennox, Colón, Wilfredo, Martial, Copihue and Eliana. Each emplaced detachment was equipped with heavy machine guns, flamethrowers, rocket launchers and mortars, and each Marine had a 5.56mm calibre HK 33 assault rifle. The officer who assumed command of all these troops was Navy Captain Pablo Wunderlich.

However, it was only on 5 May that Buenos Aires gave signs of life by sending one of its emissaries to Santiago, Rear Admiral Julio Torti, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was to meet General Pinochet to start talks and to negotiate a settlement direct, without the involvement of any mediator. The meeting took place at the Casa de la Moneda and it was agreed, at the express request of the Chilean Foreign Ministry, that the whole matter would be handled in accordance with international law and that, if a solution was not reached, it would go to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

The same month, the Argentines installed a beacon on Barnevelt Island, in a clear attempt to provoke their adversaries. The island is located at the extreme south of the disputed territory, a few miles east of the Wollaston Islands. The Chilean Government took the insult direct in the person of Admiral José Toribio Merino, a member of the Military Junta that governed that country and Commander-in-Chief of its Navy from the very day of the coup on 11 September 1973 that overthrew Salvador Allende. This bombastic military man, the true brains of the regime and fond of grandiose declarations, spluttered that due to this and the other incidents that Argentina was causing, he would respond with force, that is by means of military action, to any other provocation that was a new violation of the sovereignty of his country. However, and once more, negotiations began; with Dr Julio Phillipi, a renowned Chilean jurist and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, on one side, and General Osiris Villegas of Argentina on the other. In 1977, the latter was assigned by the ruling Military



The task force of Operation Lightning: ACH *Elicura* (LSM-90; top left), ACH *Orompello* (LSM-94; top right), polar boat ACH *Piloto Pardo* (AP-45; bottom left) and transport boat ACH *Aquiles* (AP-47; bottom right) (Histarmar Archives & Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The Chilean Navy destroyer ACH *Zenteno*. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

Junta as the head of the Argentine delegation that had to open the negotiations with Chile, knowing that he was a true “hawk”, and closer to the hard line (called *halcones* – hawks) represented by Generals Guillermo Suárez Mason of the I Army Corps based in Buenos Aires, Luciano Benjamín Menéndez of the III Army Corps based in Córdoba, Osvaldo René Azpitarte of the V Army Corps based in Bahía Blanca, José Antonio Vaquero of the 5th Military Zone based in Neuquén, Santiago Omar Riveros, Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri of the II Army Corps based in Rosario, Genaro Ramón Díaz

Bessone, Héctor Humberto Gamet of the IX Infantry Brigade, and the entire Navy, headed by Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera, rather than the “soft” ones (called *palomas* – doves), of whom Generals Rafael Videla himself, the Army Chief of Staff Roberto Eduardo Viola, and Brigadier Orlando Ramón Agosti, Commander of the Air Force, were the greatest exponents.

On 14 May, Videla stated that his government had no interest in changing the clean Argentine tradition of respecting the treaties it had signed. Eight days earlier, he had invited his Chilean

counterpart to a meeting in Buenos Aires, in order to address the delicate issue of the delineating of the south-western territorial waters, in accordance with the nine-month period established in the arbitration award – a proposal that Pinochet accepted. The first meeting was held between 21 and 22 July and as soon as the talks began, the Chilean delegation, led by Dr Philippi, understood that Argentina was only seeking to ‘grandstand’ its position. Even Videla himself had changed his speech making it much more inflexible by openly declaring that his country was not willing to accept any



Admiral Emilio Massera, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy and member of the Military Junta (left) and Admiral Armando Lambruschini, Naval Operations Commander (right). (Armada Argentina)



Presidents Captain General Augusto Pinochet of Chile and Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla of Argentina at the Summit in El Plumerillo Air Base, near Mendoza on 19 January 1978. (Public Domain)

decision that put its vital rights and interests at stake. The president was supported by all the officials present, civil and military.

On 26 July, Admiral Torti broke off any further possibility of dialogue by publicly declaring that it was imperative to negotiate quickly with the Chileans so that the complete return of the Fuegian lands that that country occupied and which, according to him, belonged to Argentina, could take place. A week later, on 3 August, his superior, Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera, stated that the Argentine Armed Forces were prepared “to avoid any geographical mutilation of the nation in its area of responsibility.”²

The rounds of negotiations that took place between July and September did not yield any results, nor did those held in December by the Argentine ambassador, Vice Admiral Oscar Montes, and his Chilean counterpart, Patricio Carvajal Prado, the first in Santiago, on the 15 and 16 and the second in Buenos Aires, on the 27 and 28 of the same month. A few days before, Admiral Torti had flown to the trans-Andean capital carrying his government’s new proposal according to which

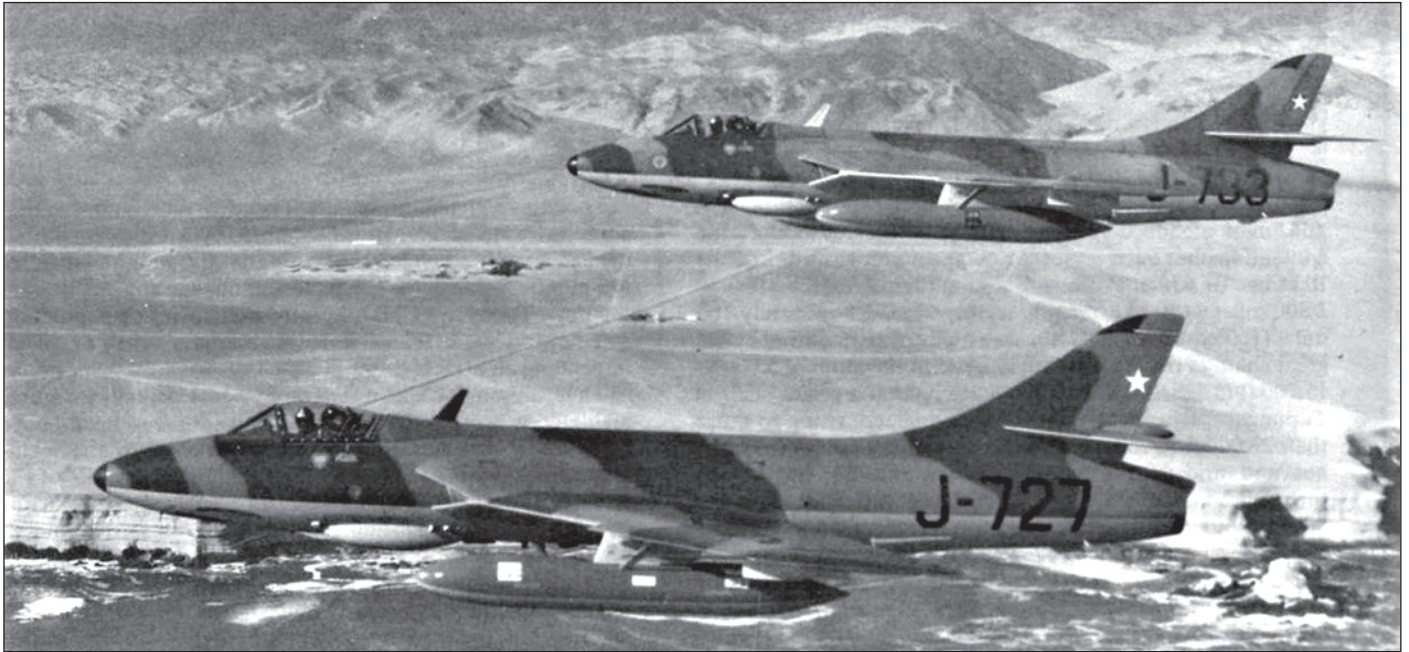
Buenos Aires recognised Chilean sovereignty over the islands within the ‘hammer’ of the arbitration commitment, but demanded the shared sovereignty of three islands located to the south of it, which Chile considered its own: Evout, Barnevelt and Hornos. In addition, the marine limit had to pass through the meridian of Cape Horn.

It was clear that the Argentines were trying to modify the British Court’s ruling and that they were looking for a fight. As expected, the Chileans flatly refused, arguing that the proposal arbitrarily and deliberately altered the 1881 Treaty that both nations had signed, but left a way open to avoid conflict by suggesting direct talks between the foreign ministers to set the limits on territorial waters. What was beginning to be sensed in different diplomatic circles was that the Government of Buenos Aires was ready to do anything if its position was rejected.

While the Argentine Military Junta devoted itself fully to the task of developing a new alternative, the Chilean Government, under pressure from its Navy, proceeded to adopt the first precautionary measures by appointing a sea mayor by decree, a measure that led General Pinochet to strengthen the authority over military units and to put them on a state of high alert. On 22 December 1977, Admiral José Toribio Merino, Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Navy, appointed Admiral Raúl López, until then Chief of III Naval Zone, as Commander of the Sea Squad, with the aim of preparing the war fleet for an eventual military confrontation with Argentina. Admiral López in turn appointed Captain Hernán Rivera Calderón, Commander of the destroyer ACH *Riveros*, as his Chief of Staff.

Between August and December of 1977, the Argentine Navy did exactly the same thing. Commander-in-Chief Admiral Emilio Massera, known by the nickname “Admiral Zero”, ordered the war fleet to be prepared for a military confrontation with Chile in the south. This task fell to the Naval Operations Commander, Vice Admiral Armando Lambruschini, seconded by his Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Rubén Oscar Franco. This is how *Operation Tehuelche* was to be carried out, a large-scale amphibious exercise in which landings of marine infantry units, launches of surface-to-air missiles and anti-tank projectiles and submarine operations was practised. It was also decided to equip various warships with Sea Dart and Exocet missiles.

However, the document that Admiral Torti took to Santiago on 5 December was nothing more than an absurdity consisting of the signing of a complementary treaty to that of 1881 in which the route of the channel was altered, leaving the islands on the Argentine side. In short, it was the same thing that the Military Junta had claimed before the resolution of the arbitration tribunal, but with more careful and elegant terms. Sensing that the rejection



Two FACH Hawker Hunter fighters in the late 1970s. (FACH)

of Torti's proposal was going to generate unrest in Buenos Aires, Pinochet looked for an alternative way out by opening a new avenue of negotiation. To do this, he established telephone communication with Videla and agreed to a secret meeting on 9 January between General Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, one of his main advisers, and an Argentine representative.

The Chilean delegate travelled to Buenos Aires in the utmost secrecy, carrying precise directives in the sense of arranging a meeting between the two Presidents. When he arrived at Ezeiza International Airport a car from the embassy of his country was waiting for him, to drive him directly to the legation and from there to the Palacio San Martín, where he delivered the proposal he had brought to Foreign Minister Montes.

The Argentines agreed and in that same meeting, in which Ambassador René Rojas Galdamés and General Agustín Toro Dávila were also present, a meeting was agreed at the El Plumerillo Air Base, on the outskirts of Mendoza, to be held 10 days later.

The summit took place during a day of oppressive heat. Pinochet arrived in the presidential plane escorted by six camouflaged FACH Hawker Hunter fighters that flew through Argentine airspace. The trans-Andean president was received by his River Plate counterpart and after the formal ceremony, both went to the air station commander's office where they held a meeting behind closed doors that lasted for 13 hours.

The first thing the newcomer did was argue against Argentina's attitude of ignoring the court's ruling and the absurdity of going to war when Argentina and Chile were two nations that complemented each other perfectly. Videla responded with an absurd claim; first he said that he did not want a conflict either (which was true), but he finished his sentence by saying that the award had been rejected in order to create the necessary political conditions to reach a peaceful, negotiated solution. The meeting did not yield results despite the fact that three successive phases were agreed would follow from it:

- Mixed commissions would be set up to start negotiations within 45 days.
- Substantive issues would be addressed (180 days).
- The texts would be formalised and signed.

Despite everything, once again Argentina took the advantage, since it had managed to get the problem out of the legal sphere and go to direct negotiations. Chile, for its part, left empty-handed, since it did not achieve any agreement document.

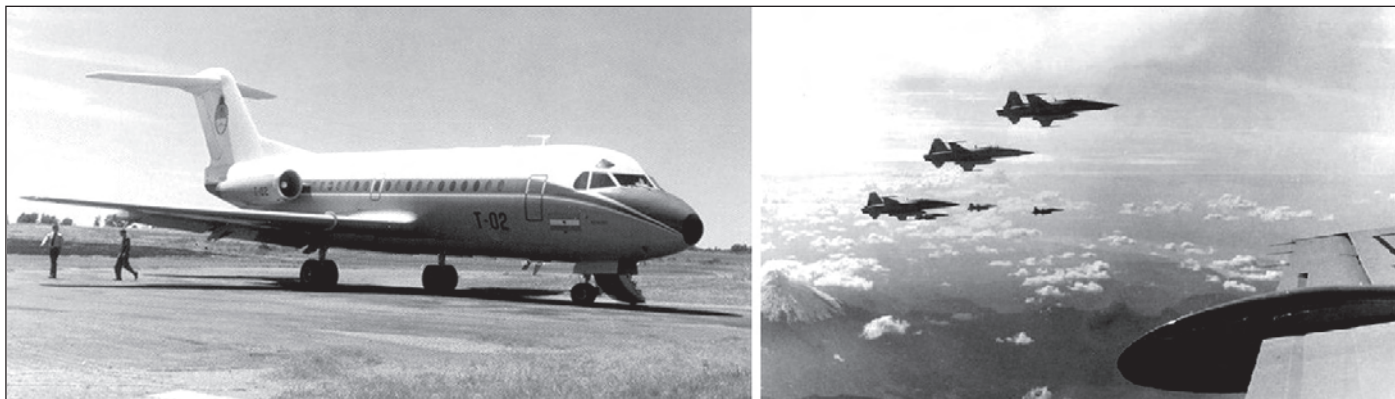
The Argentine Navy strongly questioned the presence of Chilean troops in the area and if they were to be kept there, the same number of Argentine troops should be stationed there as well, something that President Pinochet flatly rejected, so the negotiations were suspended. It was exactly what the Argentines had expected because their intention was *not* to reach an agreement but to go straight to war in the case that their neighbours did not accept all Argentinean demands.

This was confirmed on 25 January 1978, when a few days before the expiration of the term granted to both parties for the British Court's ruling to come into force, Argentina declared the arbitration award "insanely null",³ a legal aberration without precedent in the history of international law that left the nations of the Southern hemisphere and Europe itself shocked at the possibility of a large-scale war in the region.

The international press, reporting the situation between Argentina and Chile commented that if the situation was now taking on worrying aspects, it was oscillating between the comical and the ridiculous. Moreover, when an Arbitration Award, favourable to one of the parties in litigation, was rejected by the loser and this one exhibited its armed intentions to support its points of view, the situation changed from "Law to Vaudeville."

Argentina was weakening its cause in the Beagles it had deliberately raised the temperature by publicising the naval manoeuvres it recently began in the area. By appearing to exert military pressure because of their disagreement with the ruling of an international court, they were not doing their cause many favours.

The note that the Argentine Government sent to Santiago as a matter of urgency through the Chilean ambassador René Rojas Galdamés fell like a bomb. It was practically a breaking of dialogue and a declaration of war. The next day, the Pinochet government issued a statement stating that the arbitration award was binding and unappealable and that Chile remained in the same position, a measure that did not surprise anyone in Buenos Aires because it was what they had expected.



The Argentine Presidential Fokker F-28 serial T-02 (left) (Nery Mendiburu). While flying to Puerto Montt, the F-28 was escorted by FACH Northrop F-5E fighters in Chilean airspace, something that did not go unnoticed by President Videla and his entourage (right). (Official Release)



President Videla with President Pinochet, upon arrival at El Tepual Air Base in Puerto Montt, Chile. (*Diario La Nación*)

Nevertheless, within the climate of tension between the two countries, a new meeting was arranged for 20 February 1978 at the Tepual Air Base, Puerto Montt, exactly one month after the El Plumerillo summit, where the representatives of the “soft” wing of each country, headed by their respective leaders, would try to reach an agreement by any means.

Videla arrived aboard the Fokker F-28 serial T-02 (call sign Tango Zero Two) carrying the document that his government had drawn up based on the outline that Pinochet had drawn up at the previous meeting.

The meeting had the same format as the one in El Plumerillo, with the respective embraces, the formations of honour and the usual formalities, but it seemed to take a different turn when, in the room set aside for the meeting, after the signing of the Tepual Act, Pinochet read a baffling speech in which he vehemently stressed that the arbitration award was not in dispute and that any settlement reached would not affect Chile’s newly recognised rights granted by the British Arbitration Tribunal. That angered the Argentinean President so much that he had to improvise a response

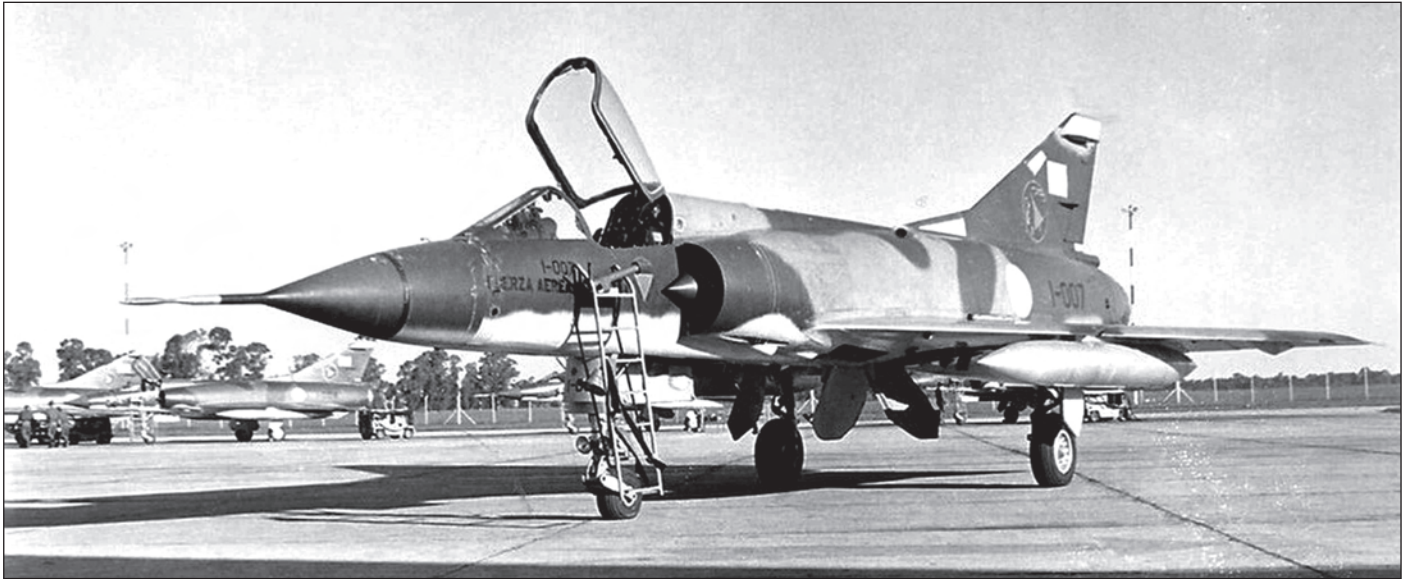
and it infuriated the hard wing of his government to such an extent that two days later, Admiral Massera declared in Río Grande that the time for words was over. In the meantime, Rear Admiral Rafael Joaquín Serra was appointed as Commander of the Argentine Naval Aviation.

Despite everything, the mixed commissions continued to work to achieve an understanding between the two countries and thus avoid war. The first meetings took place between 1 and 3 March in Santiago and the second between 14 and 16 March in Buenos Aires, with retired Air Force Brigadier Carlos Washington Pastor, Videla’s brother-in-law, as the new Argentine Foreign Minister. More meetings were held in both Chile and Argentina during April, but the Argentine

position remained just as intransigent and they were prepared for all eventualities.

In March 1978, Captain Pablo Wunderlich Piderit of the Chilean Navy was appointed commander of a Marine Brigade being formed. In August, he travelled to Punta Arenas to organise the concentration of his troops and supplies, as well as a provisional base for the Brigade. The Brigade General Staff was also formed and the different sections of marines were organised: reconnaissance, combat, combat support with cannon and mortars, logistics (engineers, amphibious assault vehicles, services and health). The troop strength amounted to 200 officers and 4,000 marines.

On 14 April 1978, the Pinochet government appointed Hernán Cubillos as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, replacing Admiral Patricio Carvajal. Cubillos was a former Navy officer and a businessman and began a series of changes in the Foreign Ministry, taking advice from career diplomats. Another important change within the Chilean Government was the departure of the Commander-in-Chief of the FACH, Air General Jorge Gustavo Leigh Guzmán. Leigh Guzmán had been highly critical of Pinochet since



An Argentine Air Force Dassault Mirage IIIEA supersonic interceptor. (Via SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)



On the left, flight line of the Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk attack jets of the Argentine Naval Aviation. (COAN). On the right, a LADECO Douglas DC-6B cargo airliner. (Michel Anciaux)

1973, and on 24 July 1978, Pinochet finally decided to replace him. Air Brigadier General Fernando Matthei was appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief. In solidarity with the former commander, 18 FACH generals resigned, requesting retirement from active service. General Matthei was tenth in command in the General Leigh Guzmán administration and was at the time the Minister of Health.

Meanwhile, on 19 April 1978, the Argentine Air Force carried out the first tactical deployment of the Mirage IIIEA fighters towards Comodoro Rivadavia. On 9 May, all types of combat aircraft were concentrated in the IV Air Brigade, giving rise to the so-called "Demonstration Operation." On this occasion seven Mirage IIIEAs carried out a demonstration with bombs and cannon in front of members of the Military Junta.

On 3 May, around 11 in the morning, two Argentine Naval Aviation A-4Q Skyhawks intercepted a Chilean Douglas DC-6 cargo airliner from the company LADECO, which was transporting horses from Montevideo to Santiago – the horses had participated in an equestrian contest in Uruguay. Supposedly the Chilean pilots violated the restricted airspace over the Punta Indio Naval Air Base (BAPI). The Chilean aircraft was forced to land at Punta Indio and was retained there with its crew until the Chilean Ambassador in Argentina, Sergio Onofre Jarpa, obtained permission from the Argentine authorities for the aircraft and its crew to be released around 7 p.m. that evening.

Towards the end of the month, Argentina prohibited, for reasons of 'national security', exports and transit from Brazil to Chile of trucks, buses, engines and chassis for vehicles of any kind.

9

MEDIATORS URGENTLY NEEDED!

Given the turn events were taking, the Chilean Government, especially the military sector, desperately went looking for mediators. The first moves were made by targeting the United States. The idea was that Washington would send observers to the conflict zone so that they would station themselves alongside the troops and

in the event of a confrontation, they would observe the development of events from the ground.

While awaiting a response, the Uruguayan Government hinted at its concern by offering its cooperation not only through diplomatic channels, but through all mechanisms that allow a civilised society to find ways of understanding other nations, to avoid war.

The second mixed commission (Comix 2) that met on 2 May 1978 was headed by General Roberto Etcheverry Boneo on the Argentine side and the lawyer and diplomat Francisco Orrego Vicuña on the Chilean side. In accordance with the provisions of the Tepual Act, they had to resolve the final delimitation of both jurisdictions within a period of six months, adopt measures to promote physical integration and economic complementation, seek common interests in the Antarctic Continent and issues related to the Strait of Magellan and the establishment of straight baselines. However, after long and exhausting deliberations, the two parties could not reach an agreement and in the face of Argentine intransigence, the Chilean representatives maintained their position, which meant that the negotiations that began on 19 January in El Plumerillo ended in a most resounding failure.

On 2 November 1978, the day that the term agreed by the arbitration tribunal for an agreement to be reached expired, Mixed Commission Nr.2 drew up a record in which it recorded that negotiations had failed. In view of this, Chile once again proposed to Argentina to take the matter to the International Court in The Hague and 12 days later sent its foreign minister to Buenos Aires in search of an understanding, proposing as an alternative to the International Court the mediation of a friendly state. There, for the first time, the possibility arose that the Vatican would be in charge of carrying out an arbitration since, at that point, Hernán Cubillos had raised the problem with Pope Paul VI and his successor, Pope John Paul I. However, far from what one could imagine, the sudden deaths of both Pontiffs nipped all possibility of this in the bud.

At first, the Argentine Foreign Minister Carlos Washington Pastor agreed and promised to discuss the project with his superiors, but the matter was put on hold (although not for long) and Chile had to continue to wait. When Cubillos was travelling to Buenos Aires to sign the commitment to papal mediation, Pastor called him by telephone to tell him that his government had rejected the proposal, not only disavowing him but also Videla himself, who apparently had expressed his agreement with the initiative. In view of this, tensions began to increase and bravado was heard on both sides of the mountain range.

In fact, this had been going on for quite some time, first, with Rear Admiral Torti's unfortunate statement according to which Chile should hand over all of Tierra del Fuego because that was the right thing to do, and then with Sergio Onofre Jarpa Reyes, the Chilean ambassador in Buenos Aires, entering the game and answering that his country urgently needs an outlet to the Atlantic.

At the end of November, General Suárez Mason declared to the press that "In case of the Country going to war, Argentina would wage a clean war",¹ ruling out the use of chemical weapons that had been denounced in a pamphlet distributed by the Montoneros terrorist organisation. Shortly after, the expert on strategic issues Juan Dionisio Calavera

said that Argentina should stop Chilean expansionism in Latin America since its ambitions and its frantic search for bioceanity affected the entire southern cone. On the other hand, General Menéndez announced that Argentina finally understood the magnitude of the border problem with Chile, and going even further, he stated that Chilean expansionism and the theft of Argentine lands had to be stopped.

The government of Santiago viewed with deep concern the Argentine intransigence and the possibility of an armed conflict. In view of this, the Foreign Ministry of the country commissioned several emissaries to various countries of the world with the aim of requesting their mediation with the Washington Government. Two of those officials were Patricio Pozo and Enrique Berstein, who travelled to Brazil to meet with the Head of the Foreign Relations portfolio of that country, Antonio F. Azeredo da Silveira, while other delegates did the same in Great Britain, Germany and Spain, urging all these nations for their help in reducing the tension that Argentina was generating.

It was at that time that the Chilean Foreign Ministry began negotiations through the Secretary of State of the Vatican, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, to agree on a meeting between its head, Hernán Cubillos, and Pope Paul VI. At first, the negotiations were unsuccessful because the Pontiff refused to mediate for two reasons: he knew of the intransigent Argentine position and, furthermore, he was ill. However, he ended up conceding and an audience was scheduled for 6 August 1978 with the Chilean representative; an opportunity he was waiting for to expose the reality of the situation and demonstrate to the highest ecclesiastical authority that his nation did not want war. Unfortunately, the meeting did not take place because that same day, the Holy Father passed away, after a Pontificate of 15 years.

The death of the Pope removed the possibility of a Vatican mediation but did not prevent the Chilean Foreign Minister from starting new negotiations for a meeting with his successor, Pope John Paul I, elected by the Conclave on 26 August 1978.

The efforts were successful, since on 20 September, the new Holy Father addressed the episcopates of Argentina and Chile to make



Cónдор Building in Buenos Aires, headquarters of the Argentine Air Force. (Official Release)



From left to right, Argentine Army Generals Bussi, Menéndez and Videla. (Public Domain)

a call for peace. However, just eight days later, he suddenly and unexpectedly died.

In view of what had happened, the Chilean Foreign Minister contacted Cardinal Casaroli requesting an urgent audience with the new Pope, John Paul II, which was granted for 30 October. Finally, the Chancellor was able to explain the problem to the Pontiff using maps and nautical charts, and strongly requesting the mediation of the Vatican to avoid a bloody war.

These efforts proved worthless because the Argentine warmongering escalation was underway and nothing seemed able to contain it. At the beginning of December, the Military Junta met in permanent session at the Cóndor Building, Headquarters of the Argentine Air Force in Buenos Aires, to discuss urgent matters without the presence of Videla and Pastor, something that

attracted strong attention in the circles close to power. The 'hawks' were preparing a plan for the invasion of Chile, an idea that had been in their heads since before the outbreak of the crisis, and thus *Operación Soberanía* (Operation Sovereignty) was born, which aimed to occupy the disputed territories and divide the trans-Andean country into various sectors by means of an invasion, an idea based on the marked Argentine military superiority in men, weapons and equipment. To get ready for that, they carried out military manoeuvres and war games along the border.

High-ranking Argentine military officers made bold statements to the press, such as that of Brigadier Orlando Agosti, a member of the Military Junta, expressing that there was no peace without honour. But perhaps the most bombastic statement was that of General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez, who said that "...we'll run the 'Chilotes' [a derogatory term about Chileans] to Easter Island, we'll make the New Year's toast at Palacio La Moneda and then we'll piss champagne in the Pacific."² Even certain more 'respectable' politicians of the time issued statements in which they manifested their deep ignorance of the subject, such as that of the leader of the Radical Civic Union (UCR) Ricardo Balbín, who said that 'Historically, Argentina has been excessively generous in its border proposals and has given away a lot of territory, but this time we will say NO; We can't fall into the sea!'³

But the Chileans were not far behind, mainly in the press. In a similar way, they insisted on the absurd hypothesis of a generalisation of the conflict, arguing that as soon as Argentina mobilised its forces, Peru and Bolivia would attack from the north, taking advantage of the situation that the conflict offered for them.

The Chilean Government hastened to denounce Argentina in international fora saying that it was mobilising its armed forces to attack their country, mounting a full-scale offensive based on its might and overwhelming superiority in military assets. Chile knew that its neighbour had 135,000 troops compared to its own 80,000, that its Air Force and Naval Aviation was almost insignificant compared to that of its adversary, which outnumbered them two to one, and that the Argentine superiority in tanks and artillery was considerable. Along similar lines, the Chilean Sea Fleet had practically no submarines and, what was worse, no aircraft carriers.

10

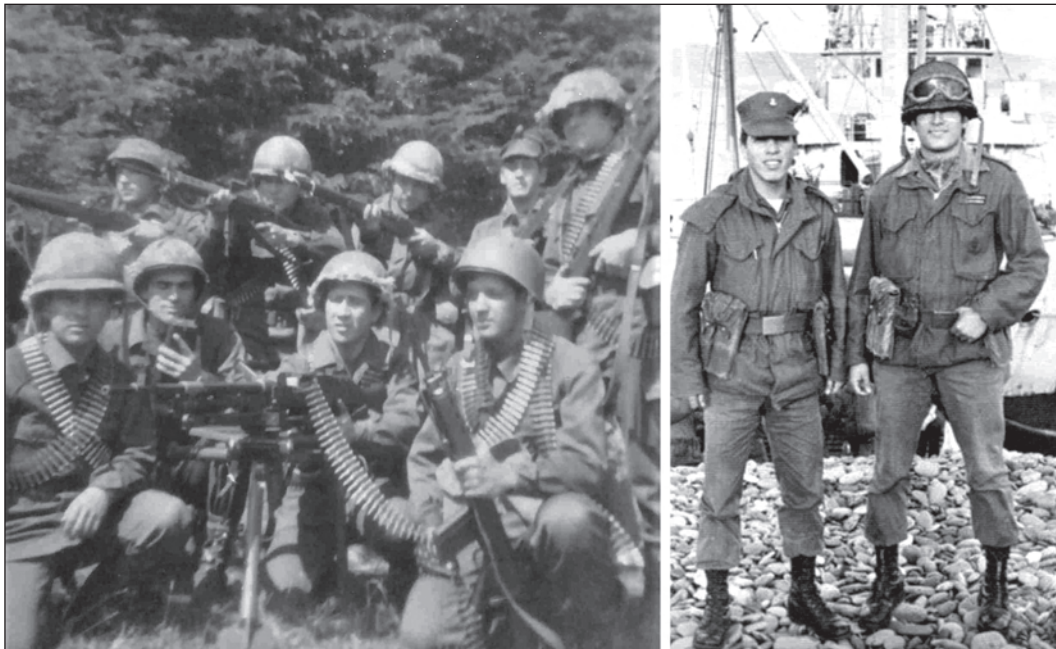
WAR CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

In the middle of that hectic December 1978, it was no secret to anyone that Argentina was preparing for war. The Argentinean media continuously spread a warmongering view of the problem, and the deployment of troops was accompanied by a great hubbub, shouts and cheers. Blackout exercises were carried out, even in cities that were highly unlikely to be attacked, and a series of military manoeuvres in that year were widely publicised and reported on by the press.

In view of the huge military deployment that Argentina was carrying out towards the border, Chile rushed to reinforce the islands and the mountain passes, preparing the defence of the territory against a possible invasion, setting up numerous lines of trenches and lines of fire, in addition to mining the beaches. The mountain units, commandos, engineers, infantry and artillery of the Chilean Army were assembled towards the mountain passes, to

protect and defend them. They also significantly reinforced, through an intense air and naval bridge using troops, weapons, equipment, and logistical support, the border in the Patagonian Region of Aysén, and especially in the Magellanic territories of Última Esperanza, Magallanes (Punta Arenas) and Tierra del Fuego. The Chilean Government additionally tried to keep the press and the populace away from these areas as much as possible.

For its part, the Chilean Navy prepared its entire Sea Squad, a fleet of cruisers, destroyers, frigates and submarines, in naval war manoeuvres and exercises in the southern zone throughout 1978. Likewise, it mobilised and transferred to the potential conflict zone, all of its Marine Infantry forces, a professional force of nearly 10,000 heavily armed men, experts in amphibious combat, locating them for months on the islands under dispute and in other areas nearby. For its part, the Carabineros de Chile, an armed force that



Chilean Marines deployed to Navarino Island in late 1978 (left). Two Chilean Marines posing on Picton Island in November 1978. A LCIL ship can be seen in the background (right) (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



In the centre, the Commander of the Marine Infantry Corps Rear Admiral Sergio Cid Araya. To his left, Captain Pablo Wunderlich. Inspecting the combat preparations on Dawson Island in October 1978. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

in the exercise of its national integration role had, among others, the institutional mission of monitoring the country's land borders, reinforced the border areas with a contingent sent from the Non-Commissioned Officers School, as well as integrating personnel as reinforcement units into Army companies. The naval aviation force, together with the Chilean Air Force, kept the manoeuvres of the Argentine Sea Fleet in the South Atlantic under permanent visual and electronic surveillance.

The so-called Joint Southern Theatre of Operations (TOAC) that was formed in the event of an armed conflict with Argentina was made up of the three branches of the Armed Forces: The V Division of the Army, the III Naval Zone and Wing Nr.3 of the Chilean Air Force, whose headquarters were in the city of Punta Arenas. The commander of the TOAC was General Nilo Floody. In regards to V Division of the Army, the total number of troops did not exceed 1,500 men. The units that made up this division were the Pudeto Infantry Regiment and the Armoured Regiment Nr.5, both in Punta Arenas, the Caupolicán Motorised Engineers Company Nr.11, in the town of Porvenir on the Island of Tierra del Fuego, and the Natales Nr.5 Armoured Cavalry Regiment, based in Puerto Natales.

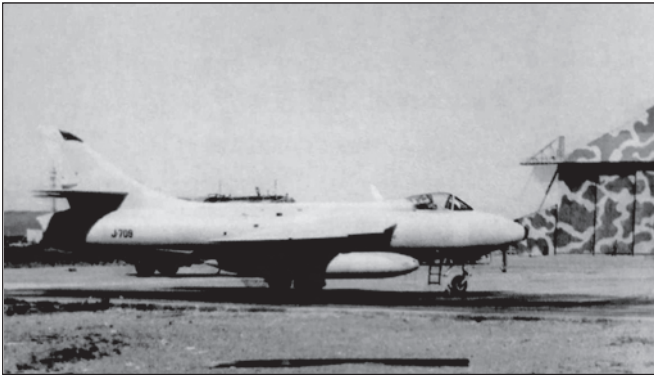
The FACH also made intense preparations for the



Members of the 'Lanceros' Regiment, with artillery pieces, trucks, armoured personnel carriers and tanks of the Chilean Army in manoeuvres in the south in 1978. (Ejército de Chile)



M24 Super Chaffee and M-41 Walker Bulldog tanks of the Chilean Army deployed in Natales in 1978. (Ejército de Chile)

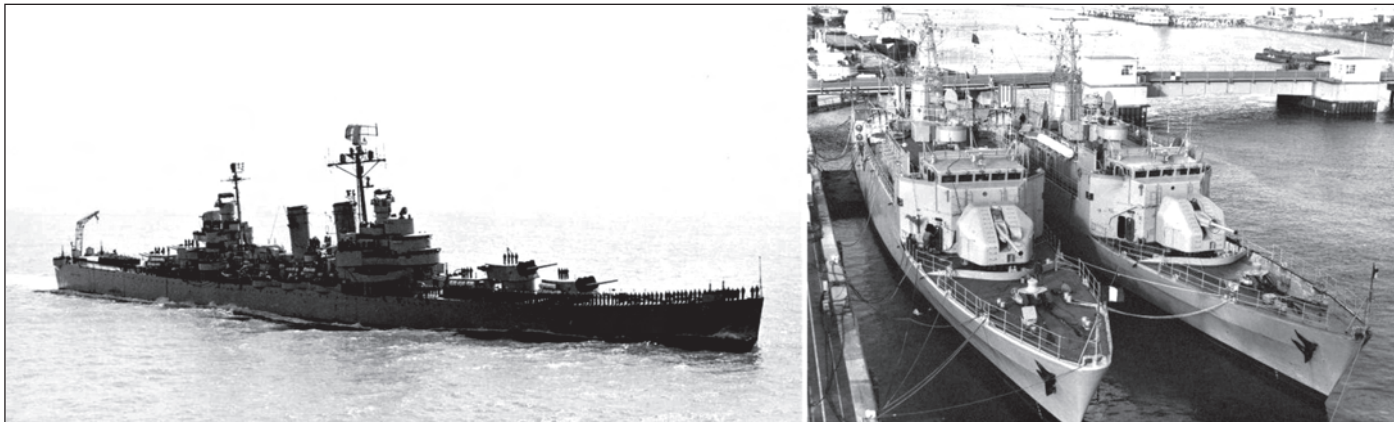


In the last months of 1978, the FACH deployed Hawker Hunter and Cessna A-37B Dragonfly jets to the air bases of Puerto Montt and Punta Arenas. (FACH)

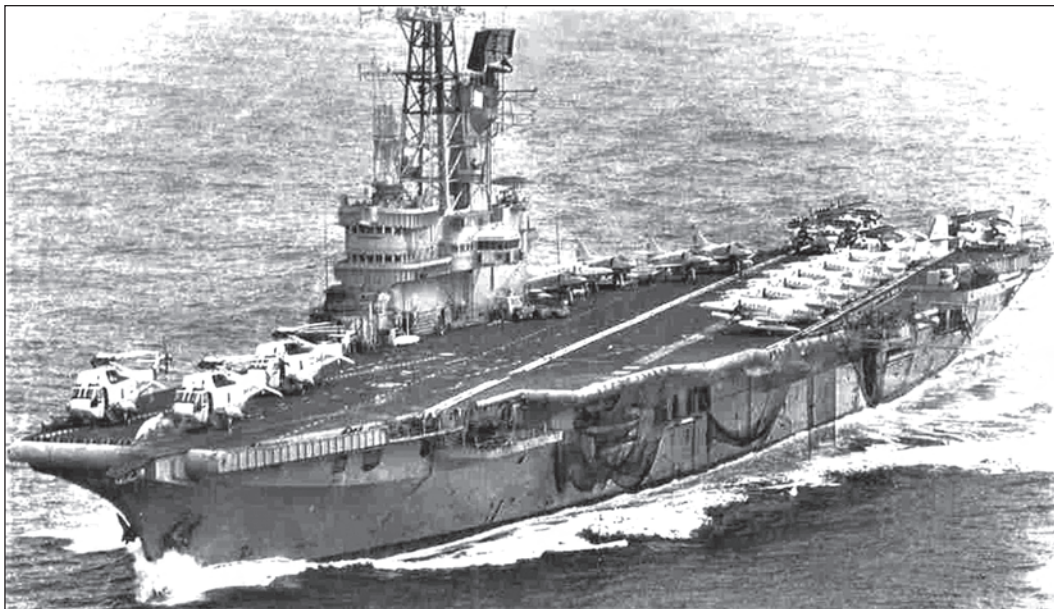
air defence of the Southern Theatre of Operations. General Nelson Sepúlveda and Colonel Leopoldo Porras were in charge of the organisation of the air defence of that zone. One of the first measures was to refurbish the existing airfields in the area and install anti-aircraft defences. The Air Force was supposed to protect the Presidente Ibáñez Airport in Punta Arenas, as well as those in Puerto Natales and Porvenir. At Presidente Ibáñez Airport, underground shelters were built for FACH fighter planes. Straight stretches of roads in the area were selected to serve as alternate runways. To make up for the lack of radar in that area, non-commissioned officers from the FACH were sent with communication equipment to



The Chilean Navy's Sea Squad also deployed its light cruisers, frigates, destroyers and landing craft with marines and equipment for manoeuvres in the south, in the area of the fjords and islands in dispute during 1978. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The cruiser ARA *Belgrano* (C-4; left) and the missile corvettes, ARA *Drummond* (P-31) and ARA *Guerrico* (P-32). (Histarmar Archives)



The aircraft carrier ARA *25 de Mayo* (V-2) of the Argentine Navy moving south. Three Sea King helicopters, 10 Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk attack jets and five Grumman S2A Trackers can be seen on the flight deck. (Histarmar Archives)

forward positions on the border with Argentina, to raise the alert about any Argentinean aircraft that crossed the border.



Smiling Lieutenant Generals Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri and President Jorge Rafael Videla in 1978, at least for the press and the general public, since there was a tense situation in view of the imminent war with Chile. (Public Domain)

What began at that time was a pronounced harassment of the numerous Chilean residents in Argentina and the confiscation of all goods of Chilean origin that circulated throughout the national territory – the first measures tending to demonstrate that the Military Junta was unwilling to talk unless 100 percent of their demands were recognised. The Chilean ambassador to the OAS denounced the expulsion of more than 4,000 Chileans residing in Argentina, among them 1,000 Chilean miners who worked in the Rio Turbio area.

But it is also true that Argentina was planning the invasion of Chile from the very moment that the Arbitration

Court ruling was unfavourable to its claims, and probably even before. As proof of this is the fact that on 8 March 1978, General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez reviewed VIII Mountain Infantry Brigade that was carrying out manoeuvres in Las Cuevas and Punta de Vacas under the command of General Juan Pablo Sáa, a location very close to the border between the two nations. For his part, Admiral Massera did the same at the head of the Sea Fleet, the Naval Aviation and the Marine Corps, stating, once the exercises were over, that the Navy under his command was ready to serve the Homeland.

The general mobilisation began in September with the deployment of III Army Corps from its base in the province of Córdoba to the border, in the province of Mendoza, under the orders of General Menéndez himself. These troops were to occupy positions facing Santiago, Valparaíso and Valdivia since those cities would be their main objectives as soon as hostilities broke out. While this was happening, II Armoured Cavalry Brigade deployed its units along the dividing line between the provinces of Chubut and Santa Cruz and V Army Corps, under the command of General José Antonio Vaquero, did the same much further to the south, to penetrate deep into the region of Punta Arenas.

For its part, the Sea Fleet, with the aircraft carrier ARA *25 de Mayo* and the cruiser ARA *General Belgrano* as spearheads, received commissioning orders as they were to lead the occupation of the

disputed territories of the Beagle Channel and the entire Tierra del Fuego from Cape Horn to Puerto Williams. Almost at the same time, from the province of Buenos Aires, Nr.10 Mechanised Infantry Brigade based in la Plata under the command of General Juan Siasian and the Nr.1 Armoured Cavalry Brigade based in the Buenos Aires neighbourhood of Palermo, both a part of I Army Corps, to which other powerful military units also belonged, including the Coronel Brandsen Nr.1 Armoured Rifle Regiment, the Húsares de Pueyrredón Nr.10 Infantry Regiment, the Simón Bolívar Nr.101 Armoured Cavalry Exploration Squadron and Martiniano Chilavert Group Nr.1 of Armoured Artillery were mobilised and sent to the South of Argentina.

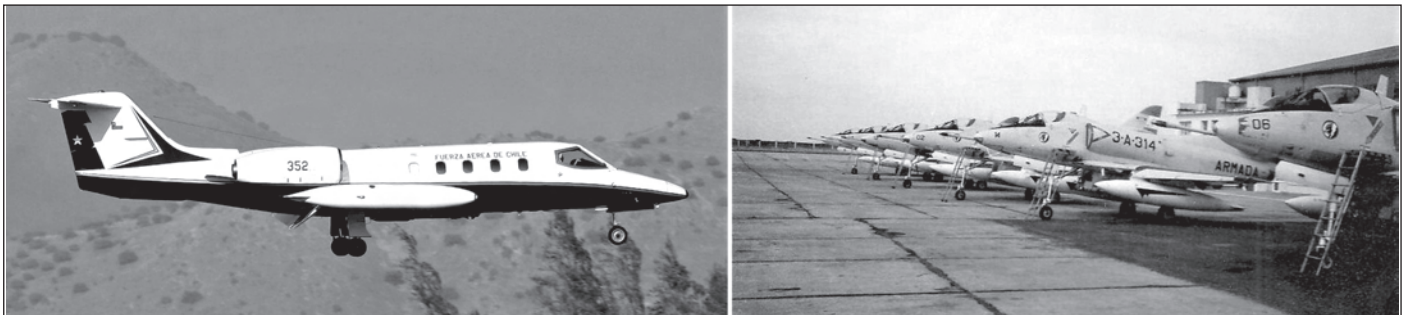
IX Mountain Infantry Brigade, the 601 Air Defence Artillery Group and, somewhat further south, the Nr.24 Infantry Regiment based in the town of El Turbio, province of Santa Cruz, began their deployment. In Corrientes, Misiones II Army Corps under the command of General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri would remain in readiness near the border with Brazil. It was reinforced by the Nr.2 Armoured Cavalry Brigade under the command of General Juan Carlos Trimarco, comprised of the Blandengues Nr.6 Armoured Riflemen Regiment, the Coronel Estomba Nr.7 Armoured Riflemen Regiment, and the Nr.2 Artillery Group, in addition to VII Infantry Brigade under the command of General Eugenio Guañabens Perelló, with the Nr.5 Infantry Regiment in its base in Paso de los Libres. All these troops were stationed along the mountain range to reinforce IX Mountain Infantry Brigade under the command of General Héctor Humberto Gamen and ready to advance on the towns of Alto Río

Seguen and Río Mayo as soon as the invasion began. This extensive deployment was due to be finished in November as the units were to be ready for combat early the following month.

In the Argentine High Command, the conviction was widespread that, if the conflict was prolonged and without the intervention of any third parties or any international forces, a resounding military victory was highly feasible, either with the surrender of the Chileans or, failing that, with the acceptance of Argentine rights over the disputed areas. When this happened, the destruction of Chile's military apparatus and key sectors of its economy would have already been completed. Only if one or both objectives had been achieved would the Argentine troops cross the border again in the opposite direction.

In addition, as was seen, II Army had to be stationed on the border with Brazil, in anticipation of a reaction from that country in the event of the conflict becoming more generalised.

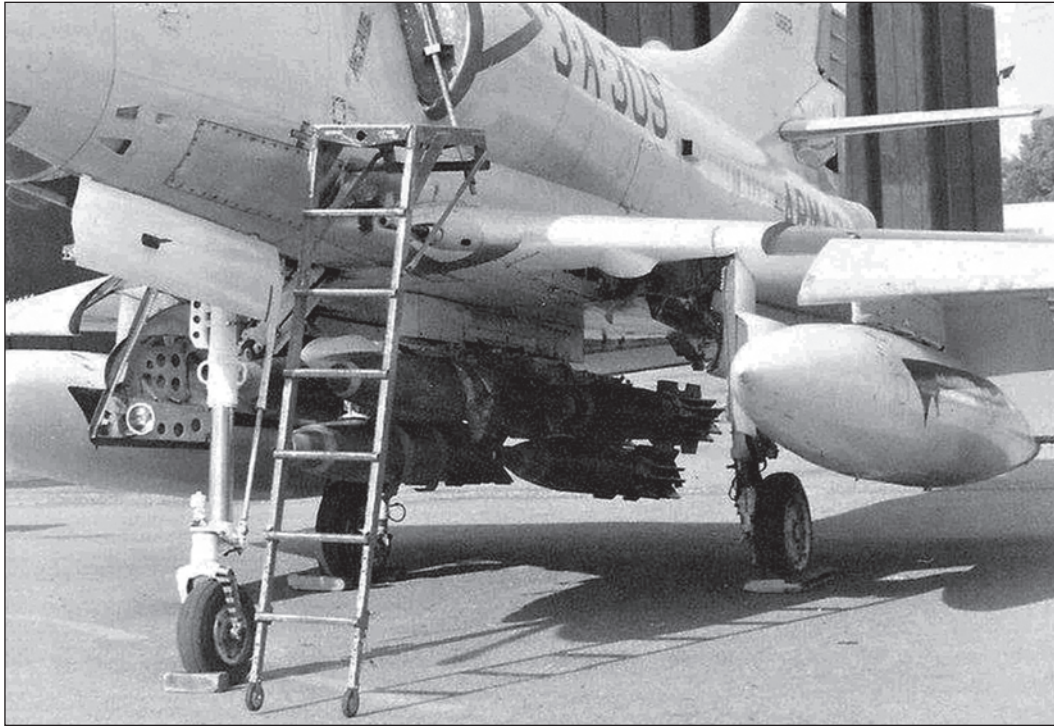
The invasion plan drawn up by the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces was called Joint Planning of Operations against Chile, also called *Operativo Soberanía*, and consisted of a diversionary movement in which special forces of the Marine Corps, called Task Group No. 1 (GT1), would occupy the Picton, Lennox, Nueva, Freycinet, Herschel, Wallaston, Decey and Hornos islands, eliminating all resistance with the support of the Air Force and the naval artillery, to attract the bulk of the enemy's forces to that sector with its Marine Corps, which would all thus be kept away from the true Argentinean objectives.



Operation Rigel II was carried out by Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk attack jets of the Argentine Naval Aviation, for the interception of photographic reconnaissance flights of the FACH Learjet 35A. The A-4Qs flew loaded with ammunition to shoot down the Learjets in case of a violation of Argentine airspace. (Daniel Umaña/COAN)



The Argentine Navy Destroyer ARA *Piedrabuena* (D-29), whose radar performed the sweep to locate the FACH Learjets. (Histarmar Archives)



An Argentine Naval Aviation Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk with a TER/MER rack loaded with six Mk.82 bombs with Mk.12 Snakeye retarding fins. (COAN)

The invasion was going to be preceded by a complaint before the United Nations Security Council, accusing the Chilean armed forces of having carried out an attack, an excuse that every aggressor nation resorts to before unleashing a war. The Argentines knew perfectly well that Chile was not going to accept an attack on its territory and that, for that reason, it would have no choice but to react. And that was what the Argentinean military commanders expected. As soon as the Chilean troops opened fire, the 40,000 men stationed on the border would begin the invasion, cutting the country into four sectors at the lines of Santiago, Valdivia, Coihaique and Punta Arenas. The Argentines had a massive air supremacy and a large superiority in men, weapons and supplies.

Two hours after the islands in the Channel were occupied, A-4B/C Skyhawks and Mirages IIIIEA aircraft of the Air Force would bomb Punta Arenas and Puerto Williams and immediately after, they would do the same to Santiago and Valdivia, intending to destroy the enemy aviation on the ground, their airfields, routes, bridges, roads, supply centres and above all, the troops stationed on the border, thus facilitating the invasion force of tanks and armoured

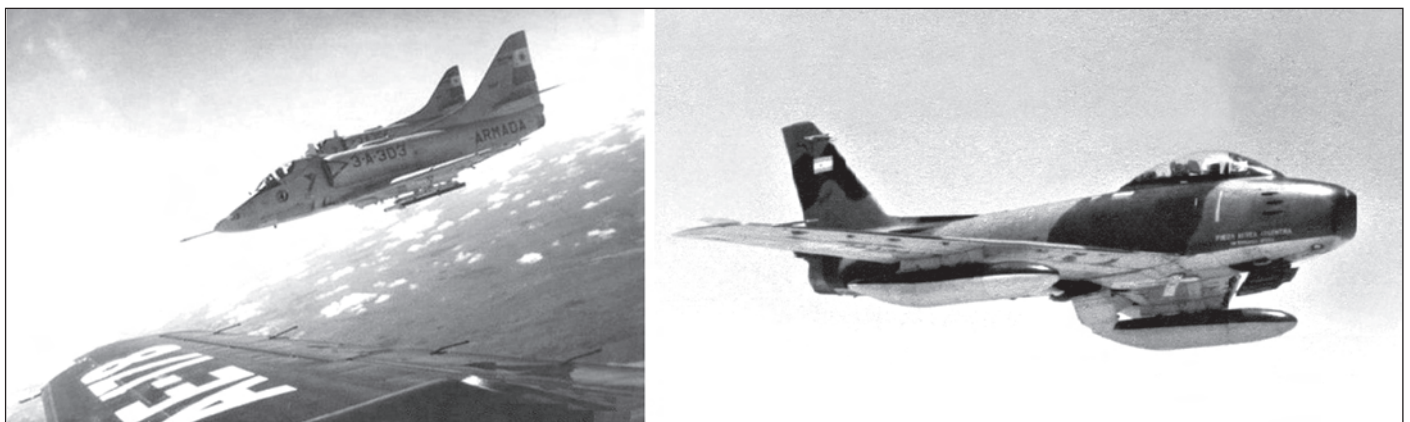
vehicles. While this was happening on the Continent, in the extreme south, the Sea Fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral Humberto Barbuzzi, would initiate actions divided into two sections, Task Group Nr.1 (GT1), facing the eastern mouth of the Beagle Channel and Task Group Nr.2 (GT2), which would be stationed in front of the Strait of Magellan.

The Argentine High Command had planned for the entry into battle of the Chilean Sea Fleet, and for that reason it arranged to locate its submarines at four strategic points, determined to account for it, as well as the Naval Aviation that would operate from the aircraft carrier ARA 25 de Mayo and the air bases near the strait in Tierra del Fuego. Meanwhile, the Air

Force would increase its attacks and the Army would begin its penetration also from the north, through Salta and Jujuy, until the Chilean military forces and the economy were completely destroyed.

Meanwhile, there were changes in the military leadership in Argentina. On 15 September, Admiral Massera left the command of the Navy, being replaced by Admiral Armando Lambruschini. Vice Admiral Antonio Vañek was appointed as the new Chief of Staff and Vice Admiral Julio Torti as Commander of Naval Operations. Retirement from the Navy Command did not prevent Massera from continuing to manage it from a distance, since the admirals continued to meet with him frequently. Similarly, Lieutenant General Rafael Videla left command of the Army but remained as President of the Republic. He was replaced by Lieutenant General Roberto Viola.

Between 31 August and 7 September, due to the verification of overflights by FACH Learjet 35A, Operation Rigel II was launched. It was carried out by Lieutenant Commander Lavezzo, Ship Lieutenants Agotegaray, Zubizarreta and Frigate Lieutenants Barraza, Pettinari and Poch, with Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk jets.



Two Argentine Naval Aviation Douglas A-4Q Skyhawks armed with AIM-9B Sidewinder missiles, practised dogfights against Air Force North American Air Force F-86F Sabres, which simulated FACH Hawker Hunters. (COAN/Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



The FACH main combat aircraft types. From left to right, Northrop F-5E, Hawker Hunter and Cessna A.37B Dragonfly (FACH via Claudio Cáceres Godoy)

The radar picket function fell to the destroyer D-29 ARA *Piedrabuena*. Interception flights were carried out with fully loaded cannon.

In the month of October, the Argentine air, sea and land forces intensified their training with naval shooting practice, ground adjustment tactics, artillery fire, especially from their excellent Sofma 155mm L33 CITEFA cannon of national manufacture, mock bombings and aerial strafing on firing ranges, and landing and approach manoeuvres. In mid-October, Navy Lieutenant Augusto César Bedacarratz made the first night landing of an A-4Q Skyhawk on the aircraft carrier ARA 25 *de Mayo*. He would gain notoriety in the Falklands War by sinking the British Navy destroyer HMS *Sheffield* with Exocet missiles fired from his Super Étendard fighter-bomber.

In the Argentine Naval Aviation, a tactical attack formation was developed with four aircraft, configured in two pairs with different weapons: two planes in the front, with a TER/MER (Triple/Multiple Ejector Rack) in the central station, armed with three LAU-69 rocket launchers and a maximum of 57 rockets, which gave way to two firefighting configurations. Behind, the other two aircraft armed with six Mk.82 Snakeye bombs at the central station. The formation was designed for attacking destroyers or equivalent ships in a low approach flight. The manoeuvre was intensely practised against an older commissioned ship in front of the officers' beach in Puerto Belgrano. Exercise Albatross and FFAR rockets, 20mm ammunition and Mk.106 exercise bombs were used. Another tactic developed by the squadron consisted of the use of sections of three aircraft armed with a combination of free-fall and braking bombs. In addition, Douglas A-4Q Skyhawks armed with AIM-9B Sidewinder missiles practised air combat with the Air Force's F-86Fs, which simulated as Chilean Hawker Hunters.

Chilean Air Force Commander General Matthei stated that years after the Beagle crisis the Chilean Air Force was not prepared for a war with Argentina, because of the lack of radar, of anti-aircraft guns and of missiles, despite the preparations made in 1974 to mitigate the Peruvian threat and the fact that it had already received the Northrop F-5E Tiger II fighters. In 1978 the Hawker Hunters were at their lowest level of operational readiness because of the



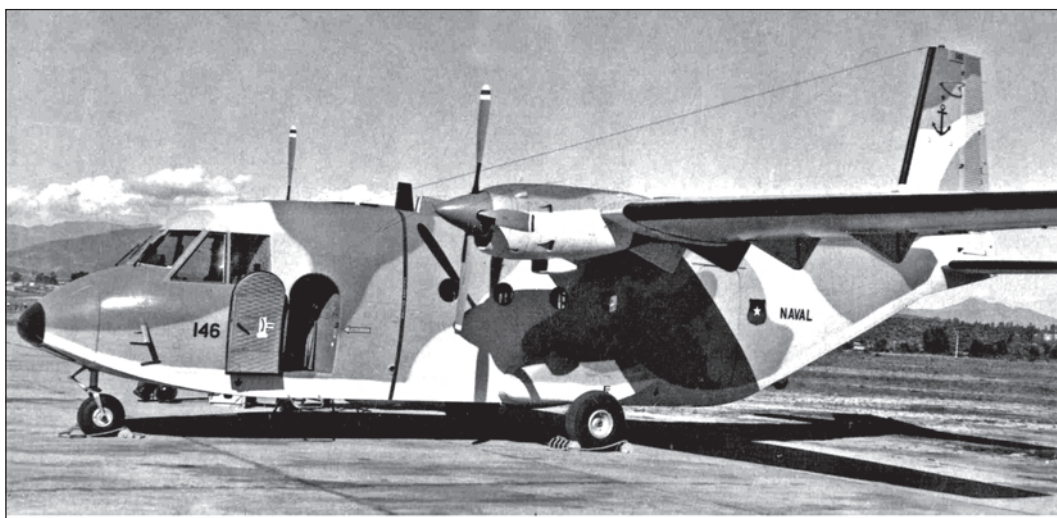
By 1978, the De Havilland DH.115 Vampire T.Mk 55 jets of the FACH, acquired in 1954, were at the end of their useful life, but given the imminence of the conflict with Argentina, at least six of them were put into operational status. (FACH)

British embargo: of the 32 aircraft in inventory, there were perhaps only a dozen left in flying conditions. The inventory and order of battle of the FACH in 1978 was the result of rapid acquisitions of material made between 1974 and 1975, which were fundamentally due to the need to face the threat represented by revanchist elements within the military leadership of Peru, whose air force had been substantially re-equipped and modernised in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The lagging state of the Chilean Air Force was the result of a process that went back decades before the Beagle crisis, and that had to do with the policies followed by different governments, both in the allocation of resources to the armed forces in general and to the Air Force in particular. Faced with the difficulties regarding the operation, routine maintenance and logistical support of their combat aircraft, the FACH resorted to improvisation. Thus, in addition to the ingenuity and social contacts of some officers, who by various means managed to obtain the necessary spare parts and manuals to keep the material in operational conditions, foreign instructors and advisers were hired.

The imminence of the war with Argentina was aggravated in August 1978 by the low operability of combat units of the Air Force. Of the 84 combat jets that were available, made up entirely of Cessna A-37B Dragonfly, De Havilland DH.115 Vampire T.Mk 55, Hawker Hunter Mk.71/T.72 and Northrop F-5E/F, it was not possible to count on more than 37 aircraft in flying condition, which represented only 44 percent of the theoretical total. Of the total of 32 Hawker Hunter fighter-bombers in the inventory, operated jointly between Groups 8 and 9, the total number of aircraft in flying



An Aerospatiale AS.319B Alouette III helicopter of the Chilean Naval Aviation taking off from a Leander-class frigate in 1978. Note the Sea Cat and Exocet missile launchers. (Via Claudio Cáceres Godoy)



For its part, the Chilean Naval Aviation had a few Embraer EMB-111 Bandeirulha and CASA C.212-100 to monitor the movements of the Argentine fleet. (Via Claudio Cáceres Godoy)

condition added up to only 12, as a result of unscheduled maintenance, a lack of spare parts, a lack of engines, and other technical and logistical complications. On the other hand, the Northrop F-5E/F Tiger IIs from Aviation Group Nr.7 posted the lowest operational rate of the entire fleet in early August, with just six F-5E and two F-5F Tiger IIs in flight condition. At the end of the same month the situation worsened, with only three F-5E Tiger IIs operational. Six F-5s were down for unscheduled maintenance, seven awaiting spare parts, and one for scheduled maintenance.

Aviation Groups 1, 4 and 12, which concentrated all the Cessna A-37B, managed to have a total of 21 aircraft in flight out of the 34 in inventory. As in the case of the F-5s, the operability of the A-37 material was affected by the lack of technical literature for the correct operation and maintenance. This produced a series of incidents, including the accidental ejection of rocket launchers and auxiliary fuel tanks on at least four recorded occasions during 1978, damage to landing gear from poor manoeuvring on the ground, forced landings on three occasions, and the loss of an aircraft during night manoeuvres in May 1978.

Due to the massive redeployment of the FACH assets from Iquique and Antofagasta to the southern zone, the army had to assume the responsibility of providing all air support to the ground units stationed in the north. There was permanent coordination between the FACH and the Army in the deployment of the latter's air assets in the north. Army aircraft were assigned the role of close support with Lama armed helicopters, transport with CASA C-212 and SA-330 Puma helicopters, and liaison/observation missions with Cessna 172.

Just as the operability of the aircraft was affected by the immediate lack of spare parts, the availability of weapons and ammunition faced similar problems. In the case of air-to-air missiles, with the purchase of the F-5E/F Tiger II, 100 AIM-9J Sidewinder missiles were acquired, which were not operational at the time of the crisis with Argentina in 1978, due to the fact that the supplier was delivering each of the components separately. In the event that immediate arming of the AIM-9J was required, it was planned to resort to AIM-9B components, which the USAF had loaned to the FACH for training purposes. With regard to air-to-ground weapons, the FACH had more than 4,000 SNEB rockets for use in Hunter aircraft, as well as sufficient 30mm ammunition for all aircraft in flight condition. Recycling of weapons systems from aircraft already decommissioned was also used, as well as contracting the manufacture of ammunition and bombs to local companies. To

make up for the lack of war materiel, the engineer Carlos Cardoen, who owned a mining explosives manufacturing company, became a supplier to the Army and the Air Force. He was commissioned to manufacture anti-tank mines, cluster bombs, light aviation bombs and hand grenades. In the case of light bombs, which could be loaded on any aircraft, they were christened with the acronym Pj-1 (Para joder-1, To f....-1!)¹ by General Matthei himself. Similarly, a team of engineers from the Catholic University of Chile developed an electronic missile guidance system.

With respect to the Naval Aviation of the Chilean Navy, its fundamental mission consisted of monitoring the movements of the Argentine Sea Fleet. During 1978, the Naval Aviation had received Embraer EMB-111 Bandeirulha, CASA C.212 Aviocar aircraft and Alouette III helicopters, which were sent to III Naval Zone to join the Aeronaval Force Nr.2 based in Punta Arenas.

11

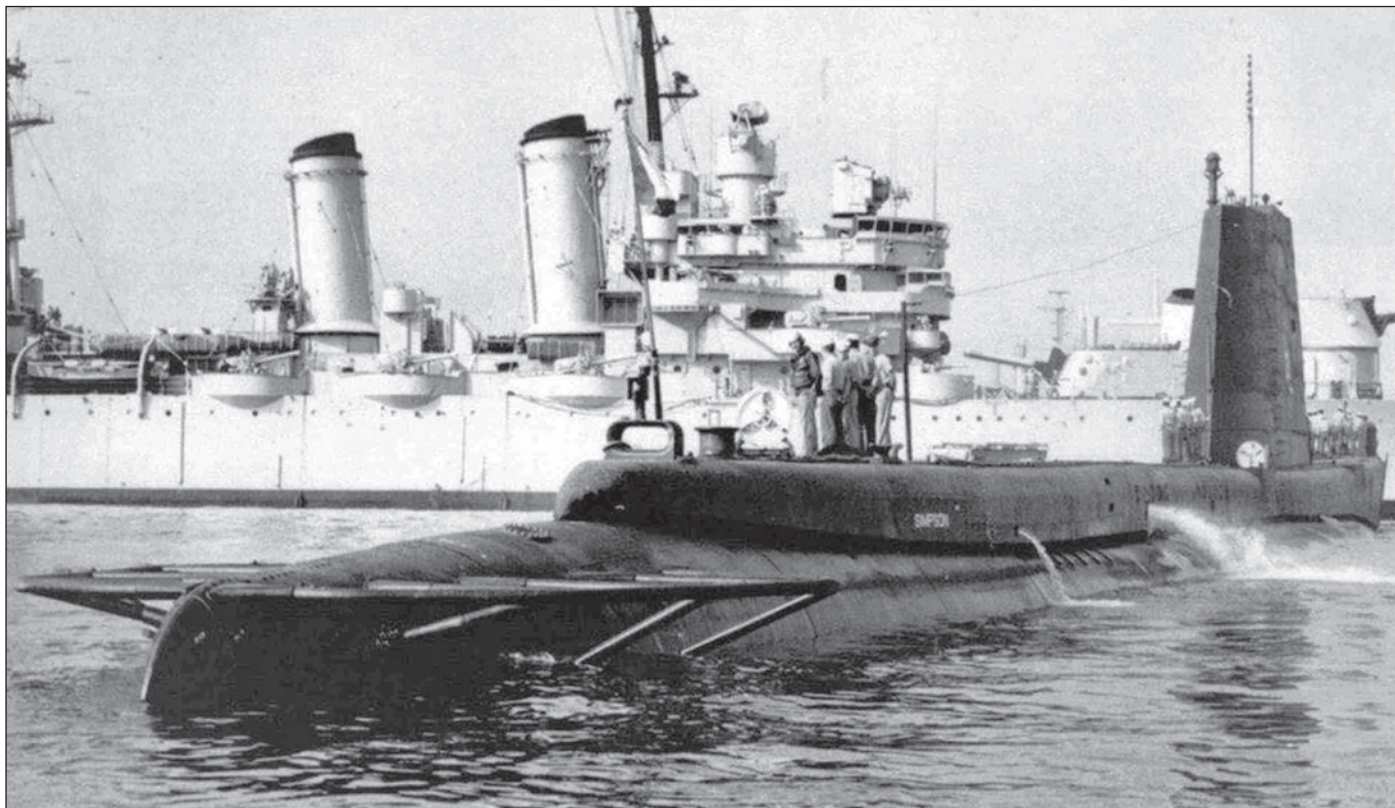
READY FOR COMBAT?

The Chilean situation seemed quite disadvantageous. In 1978, Argentina had a population of 27.2 million inhabitants while Chile had 10.9 million. Argentina's gross domestic product (GDP) was eight times greater than Chile's, above all due to the deep crisis caused by the socialist regime of Allende. Argentina also had a higher per capita income at that time and a geographical advantage. Additionally, as seen in this volume, the Argentine Armed Forces were much better equipped than those of Chile, giving them a significant tactical and strategic advantage and a numerical advantage of two to one. Chile also faced, as a result of the human rights attacks committed during the military regime, a denial of the sale of weapons from its traditional suppliers, the United States of America and Western Europe, which made the already complex task of protecting its territory even more difficult, due to its own geography. Both Austria and France also refused to continue supplying arms to Chile.

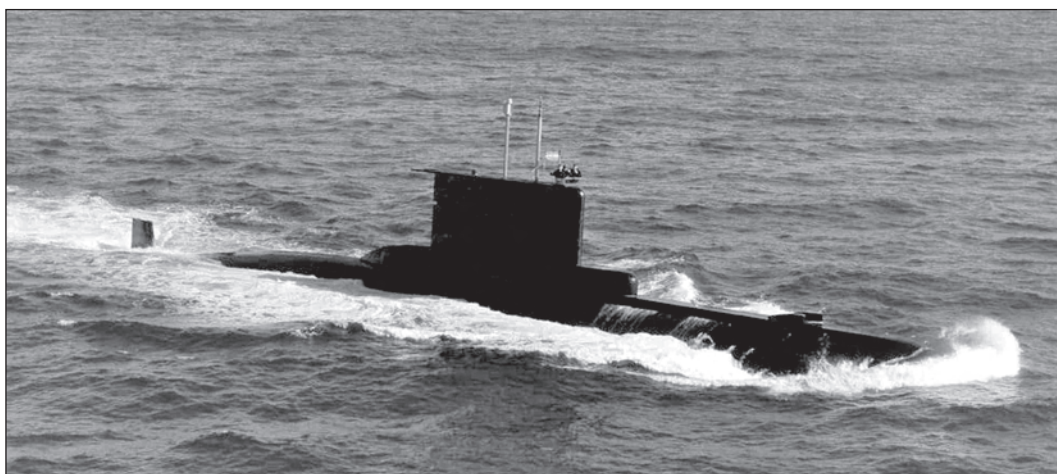
By comparison, Argentina could receive weapons and equipment from both Austria and Germany without special restrictions and also maintained good relations with the United States in exchange for Argentine cooperation in the anti-guerrilla struggle in Central America. The Beagle Conflict also served as a gateway for the Israelis as stable suppliers of weapons to Argentina, but they also sold weapons to Chile. Several European countries continued to sell arms to Argentina during the most dangerous phase of the conflict. In December 1978, when the threat of war was evident, the German shipyards Blohm + Voss agreed with Argentina to build four destroyers and the same year France sold and delivered two D'Estienne D'Orves A-69 corvettes with Exocet missiles originally built for the then white minority government of South Africa, called *Good Hope* and *Transvaal*, but which could not be delivered due to the embargo decreed by the UN. In the Argentine Navy they were christened as ARA *Drummond* (P-31) and ARA *Guerrico* (P-32).



The D'Estienne D'Orves-class corvette ARA *Guerrico* (P-35). (Esteban Raczyński collection)



The *Balao*-class submarine ACH *Simpson* (SS-21) of the Chilean Navy. In the background, a *Brooklyn*-class cruiser. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The IKL209-class submarine ARA *Salta* (S-31) of the Argentine Navy (Histarmar Archives)

At the beginning of 1978, the Chilean Navy had four submarines, but only three were in active service. The ACH *Thomson*, sister boat of the ACH *Simpson*, was under repairs, and the newcomers ACH *Hyatt* and ACH *O'Brien* were among the most modern in the region.

In comparison, the Argentine Sea Fleet also had four submarines, all operational: two American *Guppy* class from World War II, ARA *Santa Fe* and ARA *Santiago del Estero*, and two German IKL-209s, ARA *San Luis* and ARA *Salta*, both newly purchased.

At the end of the year, the Argentine advantage went from slight to capital. The ACH *O'Brien* entered the dock for maintenance and the ACH *Hyatt* had an engine failure and had to return to Talcahuano. The news hit the ACH *Simpson* crew hard. Throughout the year, and as diplomatic negotiations with Argentina bogged down, the crew had trained intensively to repel an eventual invasion. Now they would have to do it alone but not only that; due to its age, the ACH *Simpson* lacked a snorkel, a form of retractable exhaust pipe that allowed the boat to sail 20 metres below the surface using its

diesel engines. These, in turn, recharged the electric batteries, which were what could take it on silent descents of up to 600 feet deep. Without a snorkel, the ACH *Simpson* was forced to surface for periods of up to eight hours to recharge its batteries, making it detectable to radar or enemy aircraft. In practice, the boat could not be submerged for more than 24 hours, and at a mere five knots per hour. If an attack had to be evaded, the batteries would run out sooner.

In any case, and to mitigate the existing deficiencies in the Sea Squad, the high command of the Chilean Navy ordered combat practice deployments to the south with all available ships. These deployments were carried out in the utmost secrecy and served to train naval personnel on board the ships. Aircraft from the Chilean Naval Aviation were also used to practice joint operations with the war fleet.

The Argentine intransigence and the serious situation that existed, led the Chilean Government to adopt emergency measures. In the first half of December, Pinochet ordered the relief of all ministers and government officials with military rank and their replacement by civilians, in order that the former could assume their command as soon as possible. With this in mind, Minister Sergio Fernández prepared the decrees and issued instructions so that the new officials could take over as quickly as possible, with the exception of the head of the Defence portfolio, who had to continue in his position. Additionally, the borders were reinforced

and the mobilisation of the sea squad was ordered. Further, all commercial aircraft, including those of LAN Chile, LADECO and some other minor airlines, would be requisitioned to alleviate the lack of transport aircraft, the airports were reinforced and a census of vehicles was carried out to determine which might be suitable for use during the conflict and which ones not.

The Chilean Government divided the country into three war zones:

The North Theatre of Operations (TON), which covered Regions I (Tarapacá) and II (Antofagasta) in charge of General Julio Canessa. This zone also included the Special Zone of Operations of the North with Regions III (Atacama) and IV (Coquimbo).

The Central Theatre of Operations (TOC), which covered Regions V (Valparaíso), RM (Metropolitan Region of Santiago) and VI (Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins). This zone also included the Special Zone of Operations Centre-South with Regions VII (Maule) and VIII (Biobío).

The South Theatre of Operations (TOS) that included Regions IX (La Araucanía) and X (de los Lagos). This theatre also included the Special Zone of Operations of the South with Region XI (Aysén del General Carlos Ybáñez del Campo), which was in charge of Generals Enrique Morel Donoso and Rigoberto Rubio

Ramírez, and the Joint Southern Theatre of Operations (TOAC) with Region XII (Magallanes and Chilean Antarctica), in charge of General Nilo Floody Buxton.

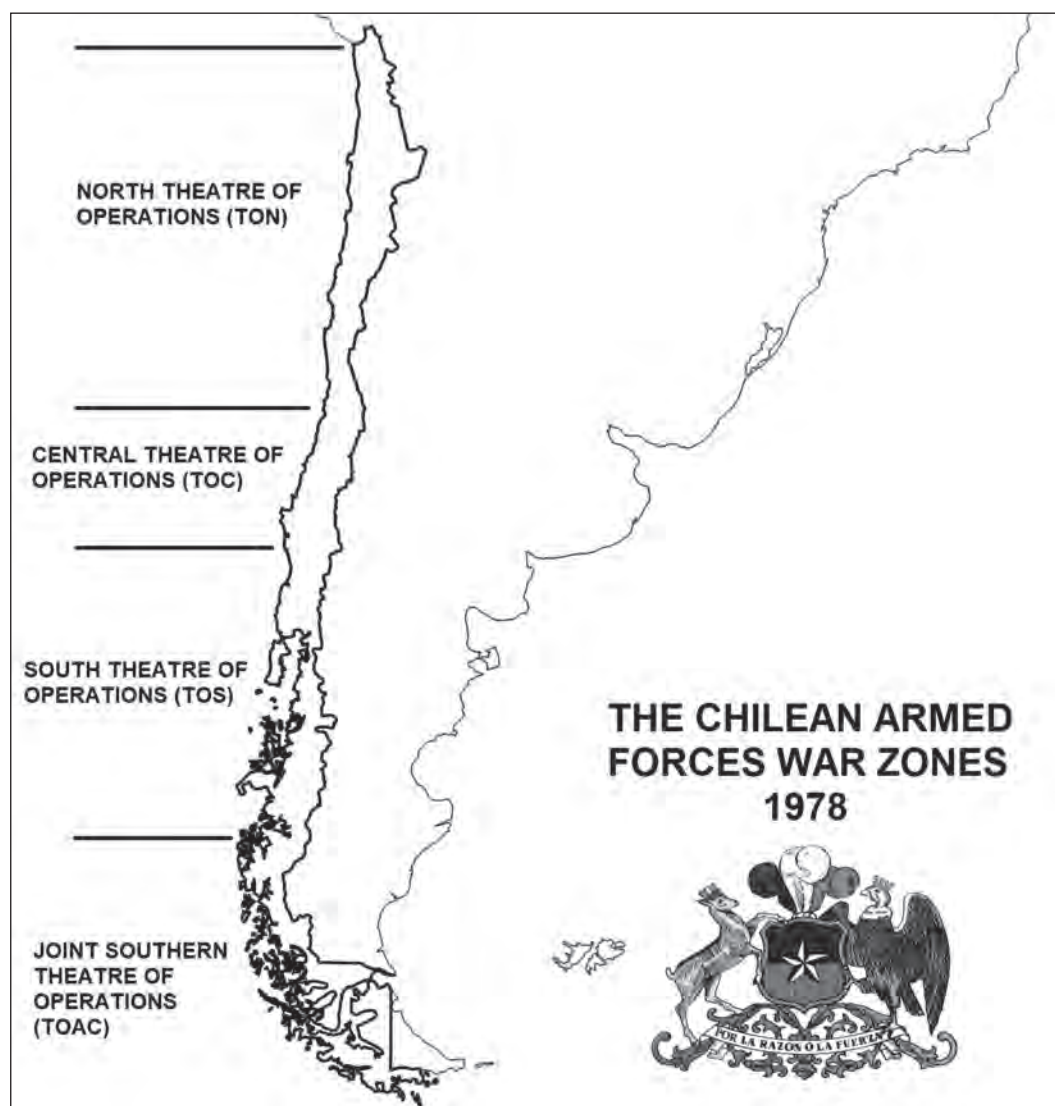
With a total number of 98,000 troops, of which 40,000 would have been deployed in the southern zone, including 1,500 carabineros, the Chilean Army had to prepare for the imminent conflict with Argentina in 1978 under a great disadvantage: the lack of strategic depth in the territories of the southern zone, which would limit the possibilities for manoeuvre during the defence, and the extension of the common border. The Argentine population at that time was double that of the Chilean population, and its territory was four times larger. In terms of total number of troops, the Argentine Army then had a total of 160,000 men, of which approximately 50,000 were deployed in the southern zone.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that Argentina had set up a considerable espionage network in Chile since, at the time, the military police had detected and arrested several spies and undercover agents. In addition, in various Chilean circles there was speculation that there would be a strategic alliance between Argentina, Peru and Bolivia, countries that would attack Chile in a combined operation. Peru and Bolivia would attempt an entry through the desert into the North theatre of Operation (TON), together with Argentine troops deployed in the area.

By then, La Moneda had sent the background to the situation

to the United Nations (UN), as well as to the Organisation of American States (OAS) and Brazil, insisting on sending American observers and even from those organisations as well so that they could verify on the battlefields that it was not going to be Chile that would trigger the war. At the OAS, the member countries met in a Special Assembly to study the situation in detail and examine the possibility of adopting some measures to avoid the confrontation. Thus, the firm conclusion was reached that Argentina was the aggressor country and that its position of extreme intransigence was about to unleash a tragedy. There were not a few who predicted a long and bloody war in which the weakened Chile would be the loser.

In view of the serious situation and the fact that it was impossible to reason with the Military Junta that ruled in Buenos Aires, Santiago responded with some extreme measures taken in anticipation of the invasion, among these were the rationing of basic services, the imposition of a curfew, the fitting out of anti-



The Chilean War zones in 1978. (Author)

aircraft shelters and health services. In the event of the bombing of the capital or the main cities of the country, something that the Pinochet government knew from a good source would happen, the subway stations and tunnels, basements and warehouses, underground parking lots and railroad conduits would be used to shelter the population while the government authorities would stay in the safe vaults of the Central Bank.

At the same time that these provisions were being adopted, other measures were being implemented, such as the boarding up of windows in airports and aerodromes, especially in the southern region, the construction of trenches by civilians, and the improvisation of anti-aircraft shelters in the main urban centres. U.S. intelligence reports set the Argentine attack for the night of 21 December, evidence that they rushed to communicate to the Chilean Government along with satellite photographs of the Puyehue sector, where troops and tanks were concentrated in large numbers.

It was in this context that Foreign Minister Cubillos made that famous statement in which he implied that all peaceful attempts to avoid the tragedy had been exhausted:

We are willing to go to war, if they take us to war and fight with all the consequences that this has, but we want to make it very clear to public opinion that we are not going to start the war...¹

12

WAR SEEMS INEVITABLE. THE FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS

On 21 December, Argentina forcefully rejected the Chilean proposal to go to the Vatican to seek mediation and closed any possibility of dialogue. Hours later, General Videla gave the order to attack.

By then, the Argentine fleet had left its anchorages and was sailing south as, at the air bases, the air force pilots started their engines and along the border, the commanders of the different regiments received the order to begin preparations for mobilisation.

On the Chilean side, the tension was at its height. 25,000 men were preparing to defend Puerto Natales, Punta Arenas, Puerto Montt, Valdivia and the Santiago-Valparaíso line, which was known to be the main objectives of the enemy air force; some 5,000 of them made up of three Infantry regiments, one Artillery regiment, and the NCO School under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Oscar Vargas, waiting in Tierra del Fuego for the onslaught of the enemy marine infantry and the first bombardments by Argentine naval squadrons.

In the central zone, 2 Army Division commanded by General Enrique Morel also awaited the attack. According to a direct order from General Pinochet, it was necessary to enter Argentine territory and do as much damage as possible in order to sow terror. General Pinochet's orders were for total war, to conquer the largest extension of Argentine territory, carry out sabotage actions and sow panic in the enemy, which implied on the civilian population.

At the time the crisis broke out, Argentina was aware of the effects and consequences of modern warfare, given the events of 1955 that had overthrown President Perón, and also the internal confrontation of 1962 and 1963, both topics covered in other Latin America @War volumes in this series, and between 1970 and 1979 they had to face the subversive aggression led by terrorist gangs of the magnitude of Montoneros (left-wing Peronists), the Guevarist Revolutionary

Even so, on 20 December, the Chilean Government made one last attempt by sending General Hugo Mario Miatello, the Argentine Ambassador to Chile, with what was called the 'Christmas note', in which his government, headed by General Pinochet, once again invited Argentina to submit to the intercession of the Vatican, but the response was a new 'door slam in the face'; 'Our government regrets not finding the expected echo in Chile'² was the terse reply from Buenos Aires.

There was nothing else to say. The channels of dialogue had been closed and the chances of an agreement had vanished. Surprise and indignation spread from one end of Chile to the other and the population was preparing for the worst possible outcome.

On 21 December, while the general alert was given throughout the country and Minister Fernández adopted all measures for the mobilisation, the highest authority of Puerto Natales, General Nilo Floody, gathered the residents of that town in the municipal gym and informed them that it was a matter of hours before Argentina began the invasion, adding at the end that anyone who wanted to leave the region could do so from that moment on.

Army of the People (ERP), the also Guevarist Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), the Trotskyist Armed Liberation Forces (FAL) and the Peronist Armed Forces (FAP), which carried out attack operations on barracks, arsenals, military detachments, police stations, penitentiary units, towns and universities, in addition to kidnapping, murdering, assaulting, robbing and placing thousands of explosive devices in an escalation of violence and terror that was unprecedented in Latin American history. Even the ERP opened a front in the mountains of Tucumán with the intention of declaring the province a 'liberated territory' and obtaining international recognition of it in the UN and the OAS. There were actions of conventional warfare, with mobilisations and displacement of troops, occupation of towns and major battles that forced President María Estela Martínez de Perón and interim President Italo Argentino Luder to adopt energetic measures by ordering the Armed Forces to totally annihilate the subversive guerrillas during the so-called *Operativo Independencia* (Operation Independence).

Within the framework of that operation, during the actions in Tucumán in 1975 and 1976, the Air Force also fought; carrying out reconnaissance, strafing and bombing missions on subversive targets, especially camps, depots and troops on the move. To this end, A-4 Skyhawk attack aircraft from V Fighter Brigade based in Villa Reynolds, province of San Luis, T-34A Mentor armed trainers from VII Air Brigade based in José C. Paz, were deployed to the Benjamin Matienzo Airport in Tucumán, and also a Lockheed C-130E Hercules from the 1st Transport Group of the El Palomar Air Brigade (one of which was shot down by the Montoneros when it was taking off from the aforementioned air station carrying 114 Gerdarmerie troops on board bound for San Juan), a DHC-6 Twin Otter of IX Air Brigade and King Air B-80 of the Navy, the latter used in thermal imaging reconnaissance missions. Tucumán was



The Hawker Hunter FGA Mk.71 serial J-725 of the Aviation Group Nr.9 'Panteras Negras' (Black Panthers), armed with Swiss SURA P-3 rockets. (Via Claudio Cáceres Godoy)

also the baptism of fire of the Argentine-made FMA IA-58 Pucará attack aircraft and that would also be deployed along the border with Chile during the 1978 crisis.

Based on all this background, it could be said that in the 23 years prior to the Beagle Conflict, Argentina had accumulated combat experience, while Chile's experience was practically nil, since it was limited to two meagre events in terms of actions and results. Its Air Force, for example, could hardly boast of its two feats of arms: The Navy revolt in August 1931, whose trigger was the low salaries received by the officers, and the attack on the empty and defenceless Casa de la Moneda in the morning of 11 September 1973 during the coup that overthrew President Salvador Allende. In the first event, the Chilean military aviation carried out a bombing of the Chilean naval fleet, with only minor results and the sailors ended up surrendering a few days later. By comparison, in the 1973 coup, 4 FACH Hawker Hunter fighters, each armed with 32 Sura P-3 anti-armour rockets of Swiss origin, attacked the Palacio de la Moneda successfully.

Coming back to the subject of the Beagle crisis, with the imminence of the invasion, the Chilean authorities carried out a census of radio stations and radio amateurs because their broadcasts could clearly be heard from Comodoro Rivadavia to Antarctica.

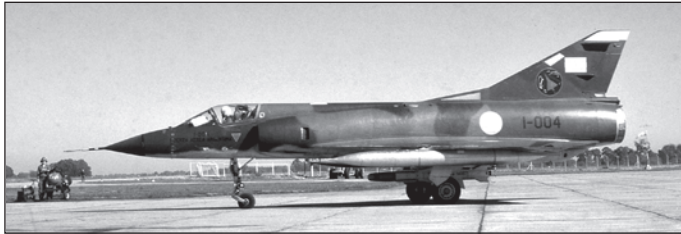
On 12 December, Chilean Foreign Minister Cubillos arrived in the Argentine capital carrying his government's new proposals in his briefcase. The presidential plane was waiting for him in Ezeiza, which he boarded immediately to be transferred to the Jorge Newbery Airport in the city of Buenos Aires, where he boarded a



A scene at the Cerro Moreno Air Base in Antofagasta in the early 1970s. At least five Hawker Hunters can be seen, as well as a DC-6B, a Vampire taxiing on the platform and on the edge of it, a Grumman HU-16B Albatross and a venerable Douglas A-26 Invader. Judging by the oil stains on the apron, the flight activity was intense at the air base (FACH)

black vehicle that took him directly to the Chilean embassy. The Chilean Ambassador in Argentina, Sergio Onofre Jarpa Reyes, was waiting for him with a summary of the situation and an invitation to dinner at the Presidential Residence in Olivos from none other than General Videla, something that powerfully caught the newcomer's attention.

While this was happening, disturbing events increased the tension in the theatre of operations. An urgent call from the Northern Military Region, recently created by the Pinochet government, reported that a Peruvian warplane had entered Chilean airspace heading northeast. The information came from the command of VI Army Division located in an underground mine in Antofagasta from where its chief, General Juan Guillermo Toro Dávila, who was seconded by General Dante Iturriaga, Chief of the General Staff of the Northern Military Region, gave the order to inform Santiago



A Dassault Mirage IIIIEA of the Argentine Air Force, armed with a Matra R.530 air-to-air missile under the centreline. (Horacio Gareiso via Vladimiro Cettolo)

immediately to ask if they should shoot down the intruder or let him return. The message was received by the Chief of the National Defence General Staff, General Joaquín Ramírez, who gave the order not to open fire. According to information received minutes later by the unit, the Peruvian plane left for Bolivia, flying at 900km/h. General Julio Canessa, commander of the Northern Military Region, was also aware of what was happening and was closely following the events from his command post in the Atacama Desert.

The Chilean fleet had left for the south at the end of November and arrived in the Fuegian channels at about the same time that Cubillos landed in Buenos Aires with the proposal to appoint Pope John Paul II as mediator over the crisis. Chancellor Cubillos was taken to Olivos and once at the residence, after the formal greetings that protocol required, the Chilean Foreign Minister approached Monsignor Pío Laghi, apostolic nuncio to the Government of Buenos Aires, and asked him what guarantees Chile could count on given the clear evidence that power in Argentina was not exercised by the president, as was the case in Chile, but by the Military Junta. The papal nuncio reassured him that mediation was vital and that Videla did not want war, which was true.

The next day, early in the morning, the meeting took place in the Golden Hall of the San Martín Palace, headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, where the representatives of each country devoted themselves fully to the search for a solution. It was expected to conclude after 10:00 but, far from all expectations, it lasted until 12:50, reaching agreements on two points: the acceptance of the Vatican as a mediator and on a system of bilateral

negotiations. But this was nothing more than an illusion because the negotiation stalled when both parties maintained the same positions on the remaining items: Chile refused mediation on the land areas since their settlement had been determined by the British arbitration award of the previous year and Argentina demanded they be included in the topics to be considered.

While all this was happening, in the adjoining Green Room the advisers of both countries, among whom Enrique Bernstein stood out on the Chilean side and Guillermo Moncayo and Admiral Gualter Allara on the Argentinean side, exchanged the draft declarations and went on to an intermediate room to study them, but not before agreeing that neither party would resort to the use of force. The meeting that took place a few hours later barely lasted a few minutes as there was still disagreement.

After the respective delegations informed their superiors of the results of the meeting, Cubillos made one last effort by proposing to his Argentine colleague the preparation of a draft to request the Holy Father's mediation, an idea which Pastor approved. Working against the clock, they had the text ready at 7:30 p.m. and almost immediately, the Argentine minister put it in his briefcase and left for the Casa Rosada while the Chilean did similar in the direction of his embassy.

Pinochet listened carefully to the proposal and immediately expressed his approval, a fact that filled Cubillos with joy and hope. However, in the Government House, Pastor did not have the same luck; the Military Junta flatly rejected the proposal declaring the initiative inadmissible.

At 8:45 p.m., the Foreign Minister was back at the San Martín Palace and from there he phoned the Chilean embassy to report that, sadly, the agreement had been rejected. That night a new meeting between both parties took place in the Golden Room of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship and was attended by Hernán Cubillos, Enrique Bernstein, Ernesto Videla, Helmut Brunner, Rolando Stein and Francisco Orrego. There was a formal dinner and even an exchange of gifts, but the Argentine Foreign Minister told his Chilean counterpart that there was no way out of the crisis.

THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES IN 1978

Fuerza Aérea Argentina (Argentine Air Force)

The Commander of the Argentine Air Force in 1978 was Brigadier General Orlando Ramón Agosti. He had been promoted to the command on 18 December 1975 and retired on 25 January 1979, being replaced in the position by Brigadier Major Omar Domingo Rubens Graffigna.

During the 1970s, the Argentine Air Force received an important batch of aircraft: Dassault Mirage IIIIEA/DA supersonic fighters, IAI M5 Dagger supersonic fighter-bombers, Douglas A-4C Skyhawk attack jets, FMA IA-58 Pucará attack turbo-prop aircraft, BAC Mk.62/T.Mk.64 Canberra bombers, SE-210 VI-N Caravelle from Aerolíneas Argentinas, a Boeing 707-387B, Fokker F-28, Learjet 35A transport jets, Aerospaziale SA315B Lama, Sikorsky S-58DT, Sikorsky S-61N Pelican, and Hughes 500C/D/E helicopters.

In 1970, the last Gloster Meteor F.Mk.4 fighters still in service were retired, but the North American F-86F Sabre fighters continued

in service, as did the Douglas A-4B Skyhawk attack jets and the Morane-Saulnier MS.760 Paris advanced trainers.

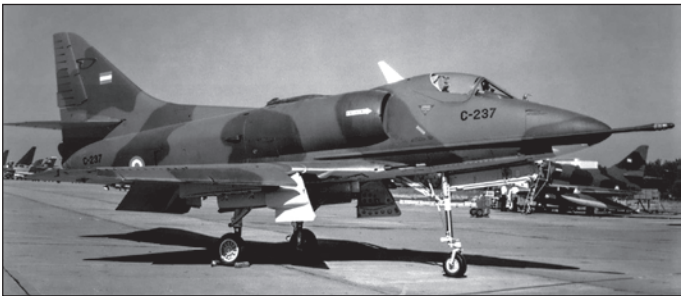
Regarding the organisation of the Argentine Air Force in the 1970s; the force was commanded by a Commander-in-Chief. There were several organisations within the Air Force command: The Military Aeronautical Institutes Command, the General Defence Command, the Strategic Air Command, the Tactic Air Command and the Air Transport Command. It had its nucleus in the city of Córdoba where the Military Aircraft Factory (FMA), the Military Aviation School and the Specialised Non-Commissioned Officer School were located. The Force had been organised in nine Air Brigades.



A Dassault Mirage 5M ('re-named' Israeli Aircraft Industries Dagger in Israel), seen fully-bombed up prior to a training sortie. (G. Posadas via Vladimiro Cettolo)



Two FMA IA.58 Pucará flying over the area of El Chaltén in the Province of Santa Cruz, southern Argentina. (SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)



A Douglas A-4B Skyhawk. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



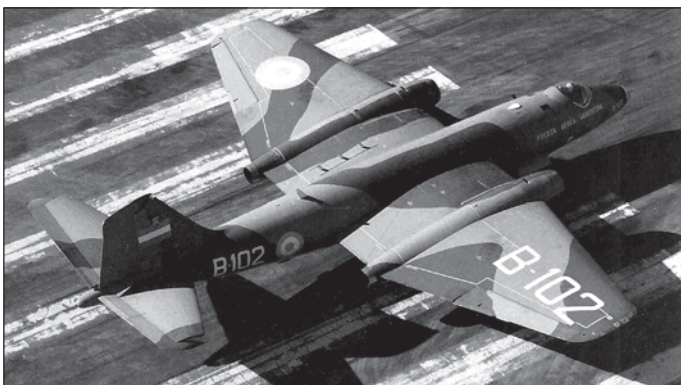
By 1978, the Argentine Air Force still had about 13 North American F-86F Sabre fighters in service, which would only be decommissioned in 1986. (SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)



A Douglas A-4C Skyhawk. (SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)



The Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris advanced trainers/light attack jets would have a very long career in the Argentine Air Force. They were acquired in 1958 and would only leave service in 2006. (SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)



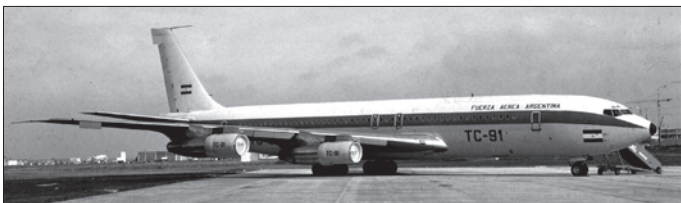
A BAC Mk.62 Canberra on the runway threshold ready to take off (SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)

Like Chile, Argentina would also resort to its commercial aviation to transport troops and supplies to the south, using the Aerolíneas Argentinas Boeing 707, 737 and 727 fleet and Austral BAC 1-11 jets with their civilian crews as needed.

Armada Argentina (Argentine Navy)

In 1978, the Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Navy was Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera. He had arrived at the command on 6 December 1973 and retired on 15 September 1978, being replaced by Admiral Armando Lambruschini.

During the 1970s, the Argentine Navy was one of the most powerful navies in Latin America, with one aircraft carrier, two light cruisers, ten destroyers, two corvettes, four submarines, two patrol boats, four minesweepers, nine PT boats, one icebreaker, seven transport ships, one training frigate, five hydrographic ships, one oceanographic boat, one LSD, seven LCIL, four LSTs, seven ocean tugs, eight tugs, three yachts (including one presidential one), three gasoline tankers and a floating dock. The Navy had also introduced the use of Sea Dart, Seacat and Exocet missiles on some ships of the Sea Fleet.



The Boeing 707-387B serial TC-91 joined the Argentine Air Force in 1975. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

Table 4: Argentine Air Force Air Brigades¹				
Air Brigade	Location	Base	Groups	Aircraft
FIRST	El Palomar	BAM El Palomar	1st Transport Group a) 1st Squadron b) 2nd Squadron c) 3rd Squadron d) 4th Squadron e) 5th Squadron f) 1st & 2nd Observation Group g) Base Group Nr.1 h) Technical Group Nr.1	a) C-130E/H Hercules b) Fokker F-28 c) C-47, IA-50 Guaraní II Aero Commander 500 d) Fokker F-27 e) Boeing 707-387 f) Piper J-3 Cub
SECOND	Paraná	BAM General Urquiza	a) 1st Bombardment Squadron – 2nd Bombardment Group b) 2nd Transport Group c) 1st Photographic Group d) Base Group Nr.2 e) Technical Group Nr.2	a) Mk.62/ T.Mk.64 Canberra b) Douglas C-47, Fokker F-27, Aerocommader 500 c) IA-50 Guaraní II, Learjet 35A, IA-35 Huanquero, Hughes 369HS.
THIRD	Reconquista	BAM Reconquista	a) 3rd Attack Group b) Base Group Nr.3 c) Technical Group Nr.3	a) FMA IA-58 Pucará
FOURTH	Mendoza	BAM El Plumerillo	a) 1st Fighter-Bomber Group (CB-1) b) 2nd Fighter-Bomber Group (CB-2) c) 3rd Fighter-Bomber Group (CB-3) d) 4th Fighter Group (C-4) e) SAR f) Base Group Nr.4 g) Technical Group Nr.4	a) NA F-86F Sabre b) MS-760 Paris c) MS-760 Paris d) Douglas A-4C Skyhawk e) SA315B Lama, Hughes 369HS, Cessna 182
FIFTH	Villa Reynolds	BAM Coronel Pringles	a) 5th Fighter Group (C-5) b) Base Group Nr.5 c) Technical Group Nr.5	a) A-4B/C Skyhawk
SIXTH	Tandil	BAM Tandil	a) 6th Fighter Group (C-6) b) SAR c) Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group Nr.1 d) Base Group Nr.6 e) Technical Group Nr.6	a) IAI M5 Dagger A/B b) Grumman HU-16 Albatross
SEVENTH	Morón	BAM Morón	7th Air Group a) 1st Helicopter Squadron b) 2nd Helicopter Squadron c) 3rd Helicopter Squadron d) 4th Helicopter Squadron e) 5th Helicopter Squadron f) Air Ambulance Group g) Base Group Nr. 7 h) Technical Group Nr. 7	a) Bell 212, b) Bell UH-1D/H, Hughes 369, Hughes 500C/D/E c) Sikorsky S-61N/R d) Sikorsky S-58DT e) SA315B Lama f) Swearingn SA 226 Merlin IVA
EIGHTH	Mariano Moreno	BAM Mariano Moreno	a) 8th Fighter Group (C-8) b) Base Group Nr.8 c) Technical Group Nr.8	a) Dassault Mirage IIIEA/DA
NINTH	Comodoro Rivadavia	BAM Comodoro Rivadavia	a) 9th Air Transport Group b) Base Group Nr. 9 c) Technical Group Nr. 9	a) Fokker F-27, Fokker F-28, DHC-6 Twin Otter, Aero Commander 500.
Military Aviation School	Córdoba	Córdoba	Training Air Groups	Beechcraft B45 Mentor, Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris
INAC	Morón	BAM Morón	Civil Aviation Personnel Training	Max Holste MH 1521 Broussard, Aero Commander 500, Cessna 180A, IA-51 Tehuelche, Cessna FMA A-182, IA-50 Guaraní II, Cessna 320, Hughes 369/500, Aero Boero 180, Piper PA-31P Navajo, Cessna 210B Centurion, Cessna 336 Skymaster

Table 4: Argentine Air Force Air Brigades *(continued)*

COA	Buenos Aires	Cóndor Building	Air Operations Command	Rockwell 75A Sabreliner
LADE	El Palomar	BAM El Palomar	Airline run by the Air Force	Fokker F-27, Fokker F-28, DHC-6 Twin Otter..

Table 5: Argentine Air Force aircraft on strength in 1978²

Type/Years in service	Number of aircraft	Role
Dassault Mirage IIIEA/DA (1972–2015)	9/2	Supersonic fighter-interceptor
IAI M5 Dagger A (1978–2015)*	12	Supersonic fighter-bomber
Douglas A-4B (A-4P) Skyhawk (1966–1999)	36	Attack
Douglas A-4C Skyhawk (1975–1999)	21	Attack
North American F-86F-30 Sabre (1960–1986)	13	Jet fighter-bomber
BAC Mk.62/T.Mk.64 Canberra (1970–2000)	9/2	Tactic bomber
FMA IA-58 Pucará (1975–2019)	17	Attack/close air support
Morane-Saulnier MS-760 Paris (1958–2006)	36	Advanced trainer/light attack
Beechcraft B.45 (T-34A) Mentor (1957–2011)	51	Primary trainer
Boeing 707-387B (1975–2008)	1	Passenger Transport
Fokker F-28 Mk.1000/4000 Fellowship (1975–2020)	7	Passenger transport
Lockheed C-130E/H Hercules (1968–Present)	2/5	Heavy cargo & troop transport/aerial refuelling
Fokker F-27 Mk.400M Troopship/ Mk.600 Friendship (1968–2016)	11	Passenger/troop transport
Douglas DC-3/C-47 (1943–1990)	14	Transport
Grumman UH-16B/SA-16A Albatross (1952–1979)	2	Transport/SAR
FMA IA-50 Guaraní II (1966–2007)	35	Transport
De Havilland DHC-6-200 Twin Otter (1968–Present)	6	Transport
Rockwell 75A Sabreliner (1974–2005)	1	VIP Transport
Gates Learjet 35A (1978–Present)	2	VIP Transport/Air Photography
Swearingen SA226AT Merlin IVA (1978–1991)	2	Light transport/Ambulance
Max Holste M.H. 1521 Broussard (1958–1990)	10	Light transport
Aero Commander 500 U/B (1968–2005)	16	Light transport
Piper PA-31P-325 Navajo (1973–Present)	3	Light transport
Cessna 170B (1958–1980)	1	Light transport
Cessna/FMA A-182J/K/L/N (1966–Present)	39	Light transport/Liaison

Table 5: Argentine Air Force aircraft on strength in 1978 <i>(continued)</i>		
Cessna U.17A Skywagon (1967–Present)	10	Light transport/Liaison
Cessna 210B Centurion (1974–1986)	1	Light transport
Cessna 310 (1974–Present)	2	Light transport
Cessna 320 Skynight (1968–1982)	1	Light transport
Cessna 336 Skymaster (1974–1978)	1	Light transport
Piper J-3 Cub / PA-12 (1946–1980)	5	Liaison
FMA IA-46 Ranquel (1957–Present)	18	Liaison/Tug plane
FMA IA-51 Tehuelche (1963–1981)	1	Tug plane
Aero Boero 180RVR (1973–Present)	3	Liaison
Sikorsky S-61N/S-61R Pelican (1975–2002)	1/1	SAR
Bell 212/UH-1N (1978–Present)	8	Multipurpose helicopter
Bell UH-1D/H (1967–Present)	12	Multipurpose helicopter
Hughes 369 HM/HS/HE (1969–2008)	14	Observation/light attack/close air support helicopter
Hughes 500C/D/E (1976–Present)	18	Multipurpose/light attack/close air support
Aerospatiale SA315B Lama (1973–Present)	12	Utility helicopter
Sikorsky S-58DT (1975–1980)	2	Utility helicopter
*The first 12 Dagger A fighters were delivered between 23 November 1978 and 28 December 1978. In total, the Argentine Air Force acquired 35 Dagger A and four Dagger B fighters between 1978 and 1981.		

The Argentine Navy had its main base in Puerto Belgrano, near Bahía Blanca, a smaller base in Río Santiago, which was the garrison of the Naval School and the Naval Lyceum, the submarine naval base of Mar del Plata, the Zárate Naval Base and the Naval Base in Ushuaia. In the Federal Capital there was the Navy Mechanics School (ESMA).

The Argentine Navy was organised into three naval zones:



The Air Force had seven Lockheed C-130E/H Hercules by 1978. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

The Fluvial Naval Zone, including the provinces of Misiones, Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa, Santa Fé, Entre Ríos and Buenos Aires. Its headquarters was in the Zárate Naval Base.

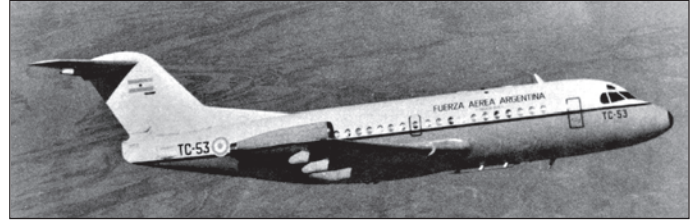
The Atlantic Naval Zone, including the area from Cabo San Antonio in the province of Buenos Aires to the city of Comodoro



By the end of the 1970s, the Air Force had 11 Fokker F-27s in service, which also covered LADE routes among other transport tasks. (SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)



The venerable Douglas C-47 was still in service in 1978. Fourteen examples were active at the time and would only be permanently retired in 1990. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



In 1978, the Argentine Air Force had seven Fokker F-28s in service, mainly covering LADE air routes, among other roles. (SOP (Ret.) Walter Bentancor)



The Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Navy, Admiral Armando Lambruschini (centre in front of the microphone) during a ceremony aboard the light cruiser ARA *General Belgrano* (C-4). (Armada Argentina)



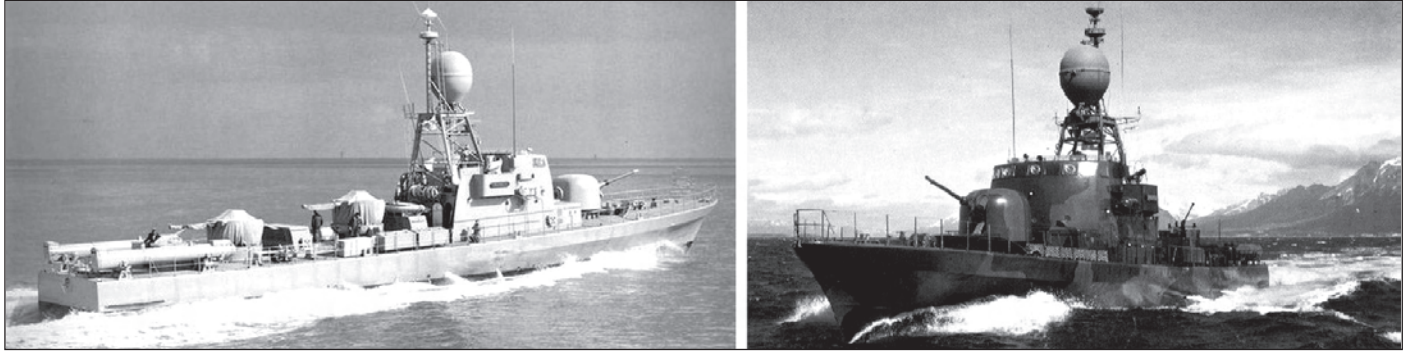
A Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk landing on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier ARA 25 de Mayo (V-2). (Histarmar Archives)



The corvette ARA *Drummond* (P-31). (Histarmar Archives)



The fleet of submarines of the Argentine Navy: The *Balao/Guppy* class ARA *Santa Fe* (S-21) and ARA *Santiago del Estero* (S-22; left), and the 209-class ARA *San Luis* (S-32) and ARA *Salta* (S-31; right). (Histarmar Archives)



The two Lürssen TCN-45-class PT Boats P-85 ARA *Intrépida* (P-85; right) and ARA *Indómita* (P-86; left). (Histarmar Archives)

Rivadavia in the province of Chubut. Its headquarters was in the Mar del Plata Naval Base.

The Austral Naval Zone, including the provinces of Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego, the Fuegian channels and Argentine Antarctica. Its headquarters was in the Ushuaia Naval Base.

Comando de la Aviación Naval Argentina/COAN (Naval Aviation Command)

In 1972 the Naval Aviation received 16 Douglas A-4Q Skyhawks to be used on board the aircraft carrier ARA *25 de Mayo* and on land naval bases, these replaced the ageing Grumman F9F-2 Panther

fighters. Grumman S2E Trackers were purchased in 1978 as well as the Beechcraft T-34C turbo-prop trainers and Beechcraft Super King Air 200. For transport aircraft, Lockheed L-188 Electra and Pilatus PC-6B Turbo Porter were used. Sikorsky S-61 Sea King and Westland Sea Lynx helicopters were also purchased in the 1970s. Some older types like the Lockheed P.2 Neptune, Grumman S2A Tracker, Douglas C-47, North American T-28 Fennec, Aerospatiale SA.316B Alouette III continued on active service throughout the 1970s, and also the Aermacchi MB-326GB advanced trainer/light attack jets. The Naval Aviation was organised into six naval air squads.

Table 6: Argentine Navy ships on strength in 1978³				
Type / Class	Pennant Nr.	Name	Ton	Crew
Aircraft Carrier (Colossus)	V-2	ARA <i>25 de Mayo</i>	19,720	1,200
Light Cruiser (Brooklyn)** (M)	C-4	ARA <i>General Belgrano</i>	12,650	975–1,100
Light Cruiser (Brooklyn)	C-5	ARA <i>Nueve de Julio*</i>	13,430	1,100
Destroyer (Type 42)** (M)	D-1	ARA <i>Hércules</i>	4,075	300
Destroyer (Fletcher)	D-20	ARA <i>Brown</i>	3,030	250
Destroyer (Fletcher)	D-21	ARA <i>Espora</i>	3,030	250
Destroyer (Fletcher)	D-22	ARA <i>Rosales</i>	3,892	200
Destroyer (Fletcher)	D-23	ARA <i>Almirante Domecq García</i>	3,048	230
Destroyer (Fletcher)	D-24	ARA <i>Almirante Storni</i>	3,048	230
Destroyer (Sumner)	D-25	ARA <i>Seguí</i>	3,311	180
Destroyer (Sumner)** (M)	D-26	ARA <i>Bouchard</i>	3,225	180
Destroyer (Gearing)** (M)	D-27	ARA <i>Py</i>	3,532	200
Destroyer (Sumner)	D-29	ARA <i>Piedra Buena</i>	3,225	180
Corvette (A-69) (M)	P-31	ARA <i>Drummond</i>	1,250	95
Corvette (A-69) (M)	P-32	ARA <i>Guerrico</i>	1,250	95
Submarine (Balao/Guppy II)	S-21	ARA <i>Santa Fe</i>	1,870	76–78
Submarine (Balao/Guppy II)	S-22	ARA <i>Santiago del Estero</i>	2,425	85
Submarine (209-1200)	S-31	ARA <i>Salta</i>	1,285	36
Submarine (209-1200)	S-32	ARA <i>San Luís</i>	1,285	36
Patrol Boat (Murature)	P-20	ARA <i>Murature</i>	1,100	130
Patrol Boat (Murature)	P-21	ARA <i>King</i>	1,100	130
Minesweeper (Ton)	M-1	ARA <i>Neuquén</i>	425	32
Minesweeper (Ton)	M-2	ARA <i>Rio Negro</i>	425	32
Minesweeper (Ton)	M-3	ARA <i>Chubut</i>	425	32
Minesweeper (Ton)	M-4	ARA <i>Tierra del Fuego</i>	425	32

Table 6: Argentine Navy ships on strength in 1978 (continued)

Minesweeper (Ton)	M-5	ARA <i>Chaco</i>	425	32
Minesweeper (Ton)	M-6	ARA <i>Formosa</i>	425	32
PT Boat (Zurubí)	P-55	ARA <i>Zurubí</i>	65	4/5
PT Boat (Dabur)	P-61	ARA <i>Baradero</i>	40	8
PT Boat (Dabur)	P-62	ARA <i>Barranqueras</i>	40	8
PT Boat (Dabur)	P-63	ARA <i>Clorinda</i>	40	8
PT Boat (Dabur)	P-64	ARA <i>Concepción del Uruguay</i>	40	8
PT Boat (Higgins)	P-82	ARA LT3 / <i>Alakush</i>	52	15
PT Boat (Higgins)	P-84	ARA LT5 / <i>Towora</i>	52	15
PT Boat (Lürssen TNC-45)	P-85	ARA <i>Intrépida</i>	268	39
PT Boat (Lürssen TNC-45)	P-86	ARA <i>Indómita</i>	268	39
Icebreaker (-)	Q-5	ARA <i>Almirante Irizar</i>	14,893	135–145
Transport Ship (-)	B-2	ARA <i>Bahía Aguirre</i>	5,308	100
Transport Ship (Costa Sur)	B-3	ARA <i>Canal Beagle</i>	6,800	40
Transport Ship (Costa Sur)	B-4	ARA <i>Bahía San Blas</i>	6,800	40
Transport Ship (-)	B-6	ARA <i>Bahía Buen Suceso</i>	5,305	100
Transport Ship (FS)	B-7	ARA <i>San Julián</i>	953	40
Transport Ship (-)	B-8	ARA <i>Isla de los Estados</i>	3,900	16
Training Ship (-)	Q-76	ARA <i>Capitán Brizuela</i>	1,100	25
Training Frigate (-)	Q-2	ARA <i>Libertad</i>	18,500	110
Hydrographic Boat (-)	Q-10	ARA <i>Ushuaia</i>	1,275	65
Hydrographic Boat (-)	Q-15	ARA <i>Cormorán</i>	99	21
Hydrographic Boat (-)	Q-16	ARA <i>Petrel</i>	54	8
Hydrographic Boat (Sotoyomo)	RHF2 / A-8	ARA <i>Sanaviron</i>	800	50
Hydrographic Boat (Eltanin)	-	ARA <i>Islas Orcadas</i>	3,750	38-48
Oceanographic Boat (-)	Q-47	ARA <i>El Austral</i>	565	25
LSD (Ashland)**	Q-43	ARA <i>Cándido de Lasala</i>	9,375	250
LCIL (LCI 351)	Q-54	ARA BDI-1	380	20–25
LCIL (LCI 351)	Q-55	ARA BDI-2	380	20–25
LCIL (LCI 351)	Q-56	ARA BDI-3	380	20–25
LCIL (LCI 351)	Q-57	ARA BDI-4	380	20–25
LCIL (LCI 351)	Q-58	ARA BDI-5	380	20–25
LCIL (LCI 351)	Q-59	ARA BDI-6	380	20–25
LCIL (LCI 351)	Q-60	ARA BDI-7	380	20–25
LST (LST 542) + 2 LCVPs	Q-44/ BDT-4	ARA <i>Cabo San Gonzalo</i>	8,000	50
LST (LST 542) + 2 LCVPs	Q-46/ BDT-6	ARA <i>Cabo San Isidro</i>	8,000	50
LST (LST 542) + 2 LCVPs	Q-50/ BDT-10	ARA <i>Cabo San Pío</i>	8,000	50
LST (LST 1171)	Q-42	ARA <i>Cabo San Antonio</i>	8,000	124
Ocean Tug (Abnaki)	A-1	ARA <i>Comandante Gral. Yrigoyen</i>	1,850	85
Ocean Tug (Abnaki)	A-3	ARA <i>Francisco de Gurruchaga</i>	1,780	75
Ocean Tug (V-4)	A-4	ARA <i>Thompson</i>	1,863	60
Ocean Tug (AT)	A-5	ARA <i>Diaguita</i>	814	50
Ocean Tug (AT)	A-6	ARA <i>Yamana</i>	800	50
Ocean Tug (AT)	A-7	ARA <i>Chiriguano</i>	800	50
Ocean Tug (Sotoyomo)	A-9	ARA <i>Alferez Sobral</i>	848	49
Ocean Tug (Sotoyomo)	A-10	ARA <i>Comodoro Somellera</i>	848	49
Tug (Querandí)	R-2	ARA <i>Querandí</i>	380	10–12

Table 6: Argentine Navy ships on strength in 1978 (continued)

Tug (Querandí)	R-3	ARA <i>Tehuelche</i>	380	10–12
Tug (YTL)	R-6	ARA <i>Calchaqui</i>	75	5
Tug (-)	R-7	ARA <i>Toba</i>	340	35
Tug (YTL)	R-16	ARA <i>Capayan</i>	69	5
Tug (-)	R-29	ARA <i>Pehuenche</i>	330	14
Tug (-)	R-30	ARA <i>Tonocote</i>	330	14
Tug (-)	R-32	ARA <i>Quilmes</i>	355	14
Presidential Yacht (-)	Q-72	ARA <i>Tecuará</i>	295	10
Yacht (-)	Q-74	ARA <i>Fortuna</i>	32	6
Yacht (-)	Q-75	ARA <i>Fortuna II</i>	17	3
Gasoline Tanker (T1-M-BT1)	B-16	ARA <i>Punta Delgada</i>	6,187	90
Gasoline Tanker (-)	B-18	ARA <i>Punta Médanos</i>	16,300	140
Gasoline Tanker (-)	B-21	ARA <i>Punta Alta</i>	1,900	40
Floating Dock (ARD-12)	Y-1	-	3,500	31
*Withdrawn from service in 1977.				
**With a helicopter flight deck.				
(M) With missiles, either Seacat or MM 38 Exocet.				

Comando de la Infantería de Marina (Marine Infantry Command)

The Command of the Marine Infantry was structured in companies of 150 men, with each section (platoon) of 36 troops. The battalion was made up of three marine infantry companies and other logistics, support and services troops, thus adding between 800 and 900 effectives. In 1978, a full brigade made up of six Marine Infantry battalions, with an effective strength of 14,000 troops, was deployed to Tierra del Fuego.

Argentine marines were armed with FN-49, FAL and Garand M1 rifles. The Command was organised as follows,

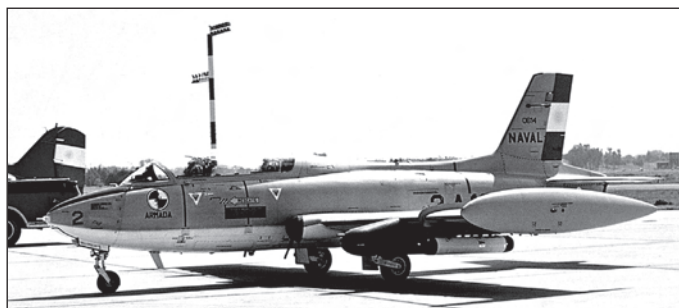
- Marine Infantry Battalion Nr.1 (BIM.1) in Rio Gallegos, Province of Santa Cruz.



An armed North American T-28P Fennec on board the aircraft carrier ARA 25 de Mayo on 3 December 1978. Note the MG guns pods under the wings. (COAN)

Table 7: Argentine Naval Aviation Squads ⁴

Air Naval Squad	Air Naval Groups
1st	Naval Aviation School (ESAN) 2nd Air Naval General Purpose Squadron 2nd Air Naval Attack Squadron 4th Air Naval Fighter and Attack Squadron
2nd	Air Naval Anti-Submarine Squadron 2nd Air Naval Transport Squadron
3rd	2nd Air Naval Transport Squadron 3rd Air Naval Fighter and Attack Squadron 1st Air Naval Helicopter Squadron 2nd Air Naval Helicopter Squadron
4th	4th Air Naval Fighter and Attack Squadron Air Naval Reconnaissance Squadron
5th	1st & 2nd Air Naval Mobile Logistics Support Squadrons
6th	2nd Air Naval General Purpose Squadron



A Naval Aviation Aermacchi MB-326GB Pelican armed with machine gun pods and rocket launchers. (Jorge Lonardi)



A Grumman S-2E Tracker operating on the aircraft carrier ARA 25 de Mayo. (COAN)



The Naval Aviation still had two veteran Douglas C-47 in active service in 1978. The one in the picture was given to the Paraguayan Naval Aviation in 1979. (Author's files)



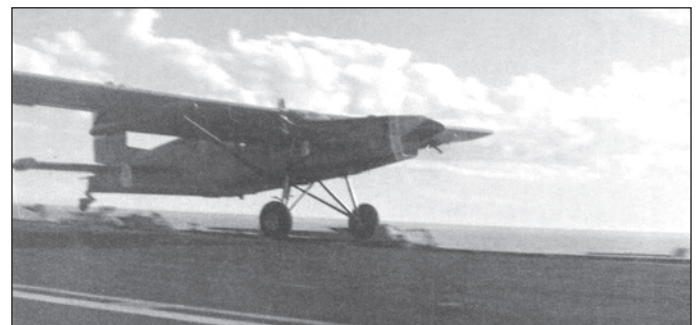
A Lockheed SP-2H Neptune. The Naval Aviation still had six Neptunes in service in 1978. (COAN)



The first batch of seven Beechcraft T-34C-1 Turbo Mentor acquired by the Naval Aviation at the end of 1978, still at the factory in the U.S. before the ferry flight to Argentina. Since they only arrived in December of that year, they were not deployed to the south during the crisis with Chile. (Beechcraft Aircraft Corporation)



A Lockheed L-188PF Electra. Three of them were in service in 1978. (Histarmar Archives)



A Pilatus PC-6B/H2 Turbo Porter landing on the aircraft carrier ARA 25 de Mayo in 1972. Initially the PC-6s were painted in overall bright red for operations in Patagonia and the Antarctic area. (Juan Carlos Correa Méndez)



The three types of helicopters operated by the Naval Aviation in 1978. From left to right, Sikorsky S-61D-4 Sea King, Westland Sea Lynx HAS Mk.23 and Aerospatiale SA.316B Alouette III. (COAN)

Table 8: Argentine Naval Aviation Bases⁴			
Base	Location	Air Naval Groups	Aircraft
Puerto Belgrano Naval Base (BNPB)	Punta Alta	Naval Aviation Command (COAN)	-
Naval Air Base Comandante Espora (BACE)	Villa Espora	a) 3rd Air Naval Fighter and Attack Squadron b) 2nd Air Naval Attack Squadron c) Air Naval Anti-Submarine Squadron d) 2nd Air Naval Transport Squadron e) 2nd Air Naval General Purpose Squadron f) 1st Air Naval Helicopter Squadron g) 2nd Air Naval Helicopter Squadron	a) A-4Q Skyhawk b) T-28P Fennec c) S.2A/S.2E Tracker d) Douglas C-47 e) T-28F Fennec, PC-6B Turbo Porter f) SA.316B Alouette III, Sea Lynx g) S-61D-4 Sea King
Naval Air Base Punta Indio (BAPI)	Verónica	a) Naval Aviation School (ESAN) b) 1st Air Naval Attack Squadron c) 4th Air Naval Fighter and Attack Squadron	a) T-28F Fennec, T-34C.1 Turbo Mentor b) MB-326GB Pelican c) T-34C.1 Turbo Mentor
Naval Air Base Almirante Zar (BAAZ)	Trelew	a) 1st & 2nd Air Naval Mobile Logistics Support Squadrons b) Air Naval Reconnaissance Squadron	a) L-188PF Electra II, Super King Air 200, Queen Air B-80 b) Super King Air 200, Queen Air B-80, HS-125
ARA 25 de Mayo aircraft carrier (V-2)	BNPB Punta Alta	a) Air Naval Carrier Group (GAE)	a) A-4Q Skyhawk, T-28P Fennec, S.2A/S.2E Tracker, SA.316B Alouette III, S-61D-4 Sea King

Table 9: Argentine Naval Aviation aircraft types on strength in 1978⁵		
Type/Years in service⁶	Number of aircraft	Role
Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk (1972–1988)	11	Fighter/attack
Aermacchi MB.326GB Pelican (1968–2007)	8	Advanced jet trainer/ Attack
Grumman S2A/F Tracker (1962–1979)	5	Maritime Patrol/ASW
Grumman S2E Tracker (1978–1993)	5	Maritime Patrol/ASW
Lockheed SP-2E/H Neptune (1977–1982)	6	Maritime Patrol/ASW
North American T-28F/P Fennec (1966–1978)	23	Advanced trainer/ light attack
Beechcraft T-34C-1 Turbo Mentor (1978–Present)*	15	Trainer/light attack
Lockheed L-188PF Electra (1973–1998)	3	Personnel & cargo transport maritime surveillance
Douglas C-47 Skytrain (1946–1979)	2	Transport
Hawker HS-125 Series 400B (1972–1994)	1	VIP Transport
Beechcraft Super King Air 200 (1978–Present)	3	Light transport
Beechcraft Queen Air B-80 (1971–1992)	5	Light transport/ Air Photography
Pilatus PC-6B/H2 Turbo Porter (1971–Present)	3	Multipurpose/ light transport
Aerospatiale SA.316B Alouette III (1969–2010)	10	Multipurpose/ light attack

Table 9: Argentine Naval Aviation aircraft types on strength in 1978 (continued)

Sikorsky S-61D-4 Sea King (1971–Present)	5	ASW/transport
Westland Sea Lynx HAS Mk.23 (1978–1982)	2	Multipurpose/ light attack

*They arrived in December 1978 and were not deployed to the conflict zone.

- Marine Infantry Battalion Nr.2 (BIM.2) Frigate Captain D. Pedro Edgardo Giachino, in Baterías Marine Infantry Base in Punta Alta, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Marine Infantry Battalion Nr.3 (BIM.3) Admiral Eleazar Videla, in Zárate Naval Base, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Marine Infantry Battalion Nr.4 (BIM.4), in the Ushuaia Naval Base, in the Province of Tierra del Fuego.
- Marine Infantry Nr.5 (BIM.5) in the city of Rio Grande, Province of Tierra del Fuego.
- Amphibious Commando Group, in Puerto Belgrano Naval Base, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Combat Support Service (SPAC), in Punta Alta, province of Buenos Aires.
- Security Battalion of the General Staff of the Navy, in the Libertad Building in the city of Buenos Aires.
- Security Battalion of the Puerto Belgrano Naval Base, in Puerto Belgrano, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Command and Logistics Support Battalion, in Puerto Belgrano, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Amphibious Vehicle Battalion No.1, in Baterías Marine Infantry Base in Punta Alta, Province of Buenos Aires. In 1972, the Argentine Navy incorporated 21AMTRAC

LVTP 7A-1 amphibious tracked vehicles (generically called VAO, *Vehículo anfibio a oruga*, Tracked Amphibious Vehicle), of which 19 were personnel carriers (LVTP 7), 1 Command (LVTC 7), and 1 Recovery (LVTR 7). Its main armament was a 12.7mm M85 machine gun located in a 360 degree rotating turret. During the 1970s, faced with the need to modernise its amphibious capacity, the Navy also incorporated 15 LARC-5 wheeled amphibious vehicles (called VAR, *Vehículo Anfibio a Ruedas*, Wheeled Amphibious Vehicle). On 12 December 1978, the Amphibious Vehicle Battalion No. 1 was assigned to the Austral Theatre of Operations on the Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, due to the conflict generated with Chile over the Beagle Channel.



An AMTRAC LVTP-7A-1 amphibious vehicle known in Argentina as VAO (Tracked Amphibious Vehicle), of the Marine Corps. (Armada Argentina)



The entire Marine Infantry Battalion BIM 4 in the town of Ushuaia in 1978. (Armada Argentina)



Four Coast Guard vessels: the PNA Toll (GC-22), the PNA Tonina (GC-47), the GC-48, and the PNA Lynch (GC-21) (Histarmar Archives)

- Communications Battalion Nr.1, in Puerto Belgrano Naval Base, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Field Artillery Battalion Nr.1, in Puerto Belgrano Naval Base, Province of Buenos Aires. So far as equipment is concerned, the Marines had 12 Thomson Brandt MO120 AM50 heavy mortars, 30 81mm mortars and 45 60mm mortars. As anti-tank weapons they had Bantam missiles, 105mm and 75mm recoilless guns, Instalaza 88.9mm rocket launchers. They also had 6 M114 155mm howitzers and 12 M101 105mm howitzers.
- Anti-aircraft Battalion, in Puerto Belgrano Naval Base, Province of Buenos Aires.
- Amphibious Engineers Company, in Puerto Belgrano Naval Base, Province of Buenos Aires.

Prefectura Naval Argentina (Argentine Coast Guard)

The Argentine Coast Guard (PNA) was a force that answered to the Command in Chief of the Navy in 1978 and through which it exercised the police service of security at sea, as well as customs auxiliary police. It had jurisdiction over seas, rivers, lagoons, lakes, and canals throughout the territories, including Antarctica and the islands of the South Atlantic.

The PNA was organised into a National Prefecture, National Sub-prefecture, directorates, departments, services, zone prefectures, prefectures, sub-prefectures, and institutes. At that time, the Command of the PNA was exercised by an Admiral of the Argentine Navy with the title of General Prefect.

The country was divided into 10 Naval Prefectures: Upper Paraná River Zone (Headquarters in Posadas), Upper Uruguay River Zone (Pasos de los Libres), Lower Paraná River Zone (Rosario), Lower Uruguay River Zone (Concepción del Uruguay), Delta Zone (Tigre), Lacustre and Comahue Zone (Neuquén), North Argentine Sea Zone

(Bahía Blanca), South Argentine Sea Zone (Rio Gallegos), Rio de la Plata Zone (Buenos Aires), and Superior Paraná and Paraguay River Zone (Corrientes).

At the end of the 1970s the Coast Guard's fleet of ships comprised; two Coast Guard boats (CG-13 PNA *Delfín* and GC-47 PNA *Tonina*), three speedboats (GC-21 PNA *Lynch*, GC-22 PNA *Toll* and GC-33 PNA *Erezcano*), a River Boat (CG-34 PNA *Dorado*), a tug (CG-41 PNA *Rawson*) and eight Type 48 speedboats (GC-48 to GC-55), plus some other small vessels. Its larger boats, the Frigate GC-11 PNA *Azopardo* (ex Argentine Navy ARA *Hércules*) and the Minesweeper GC-12 PNA *Spiro* (ex Argentine Navy ARA *Spiro*) were already retired from active service.

Aviación de la Prefectura Naval Argentina (Coast Guard Aviation)

In 1970, the Aviation of the Argentine Coast Guard became subsidiary to the Directorate of Zone Prefectures under the name of Aviation Division. It was reorganised as follows: Headquarters, Operations Section, Maintenance Section, Accounting Section, Secretariat, Office and Personnel Section, and Communications Section. During the 1970s, the air fleet was also renewed with the acquisition of five Shorts SC-7 Skyvan 3M-400, which replaced the De Havilland D.H.104 Dove and Douglas DC-3 aircraft. They were in active service from 1971 to 1993. Six Hughes 369HS helicopters were acquired, which replaced the Bell 47G/J. The Hughes helicopters were in active service from 1968 to 1988. In 1972, a central heliport with two hangars was built in Dock F of the Port of Buenos Aires. The Skyvans belonged to the Fixed Wing Squadron and the Hughes to the Rotary Wing Squadron.

As of 7 October 1978, and until 24 March 1979, the Coast Guard Aviation became responsible to the Naval Operations Command of



On the left, a Hughes 369HS helicopter with inflatable pontoons (Michael Magnusson) and on the right Shorts SC-7 Skyvan 3M-400 (Histarmar Archives)

the Argentine Navy because of the Beagle Crisis. In that period of time, its aircraft flew a total of 1,036 hours.

Ejército Argentino (Argentine Army)

In 1972, the Argentine Army created its *Plan de Capacidades Marco Interno* (Internal Framework Capacities Plan) that divided Argentine territory into four defence zones plus the area of the Federal Capital, for the fight against terrorism. These zones coincided with the natural jurisdictions of the Army Corps. Three years later, the General Command of the Army issued the Directive 404/75 which placed the Argentine Federal Police, the National Penitentiary Service and the provincial police and prison forces under its operational control

On 27 August 1975, Brigadier General Jorge Rafael Videla was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army. He was promoted to Major General on 24 October 1975 and then to Lieutenant General on 28 November of the same year. Together with Admiral Massera and Brigadier General Agosti, he led the coup d'état of 24 March 1976, which overthrew President María Estela Martínez de Perón, installing a military junta. He assumed the *de facto* presidency and remained as Commander-in-Chief of the Army until 31 July 1978, when Lieutenant General Roberto Eduardo Viola was appointed. Lieutenant General Videla continued as President of the Republic until 29 March 1981.

In the 1970s, the Argentine Army was organised as in Tables 10-15 below:

The Argentine Army Regiment was composed up of three companies of infantry, a commando company and a support services company, to which was added a group of heavy weapons or artillery, to a total of 700 troops. Each company was comprised of 150 men organised as follows: 4 infantry sections (platoons) and one heavy weapons section. Each infantry section consisted of 30 to 35 soldiers.

The Brigade was the largest unit and in the Argentine Army it had approximately 2,200 to

2,500 men organised in two or three infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment, or three cavalry regiments in the Armoured Brigades. To these regiments was added an artillery group (field or anti-aircraft), a logistics battalion and another battalion for support services.

The light weapons of the Argentine Army were the FN49, Garand-Beretta BM59, the Belgian FN FAL rifle, the locally manufactured PAM-2 and FM MAG 60-20 submachine guns. Two other models were also locally manufactured, the FM MAG 60-30 to be mounted on helicopters and the FM MAG 60-40 for use on tanks. Three types of recoilless guns were available to troops, the 105mm FM Czekalski model 1968-70, the 75mm M20, and the DGFM 75mm gun built in Argentina. For anti-tank missiles, there were the Cobra 2000, Bofors RB53 Bantam and the locally manufactured Mathogo 1 and 2.

The howitzers used by the Field Artillery were the 75mm Bofors L40 Argentine Model 1935, 105mm Oto Melara M56, 105mm M2A1, 155mm Schneider L15 and L30 Argentine Model 1928. As for the anti-aircraft artillery, there were 40mm Bofors L60 Model 1936, 40mm Bofors L70/40, 30mm Hispano Suiza HS.831 and

Table 10: Argentine I Army Corps⁷

Headquarters: Palermo Barracks, Buenos Aires.

Commander: Major General Carlos Guillermo Suárez Mason

Jurisdiction: Defence Zone 1: Provinces of Buenos Aires and La Pampa

Military Unit	City
101 Armoured Cavalry Exploration Detachment	Toay
101 Artillery Group	Junín
101 Intelligence Detachment	La Plata
102 Intelligence Detachment	Tandil
101 Air Defence Artillery Group	Ciudadela
X Mechanised Infantry Brigade	La Plata
I Armoured Cavalry Brigade	Tandil

Table 11: Argentine II Army Corps 'Teniente General Juan Carlos Sánchez'⁸

Headquarters: Army Garrison in Rosario, Province of Santa Fé.

Commander: Major General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri

Jurisdiction: Defence Zone 2: Provinces of Formosa, Chaco, Misiones, Corrientes, Santa Fé and Entre Ríos

Military Unit	City
121 Command Communication Battalion	Mercedes
III Infantry Brigade	Resistencia
VII Infantry Brigade	Corrientes
II Armoured Cavalry Brigade	Paraná

Table 12: Argentine III Army Corps 'Ejército del Norte'⁹	
Headquarters: Army Garrison in Córdoba	
Commander: Major General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez	
Jurisdiction: Defence Zone 3: Provinces of Córdoba, San Luis, Mendoza, San Juan, La Rioja, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Salta and Jujuy	
Military Unit	City
IV Airborne Infantry Brigade	Córdoba
V Mountain Infantry Brigade	Salta
VIII Mountain Infantry Brigade	Mendoza

Table 13: Argentine IV Army Corps¹⁰	
Headquarters: Army Garrison in Salta	
Commander: Major General José Montes	
Jurisdiction: Defence Zone 3: Neuquén, La Pampa, Mendoza, San Luis, San Juan and west of Rio Negro	
Military Unit	City
161 Armoured Cavalry Exploration Detachment	Campo de los Andes
161 Artillery Group	Zapala
161 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group	San Luis
161 Communication Battalion	Santa Rosa
161 Engineers Battalion	Santa Rosa
161 Military Police Company	Santa Rosa

Table 14: Argentine V Army Corps 'Teniente General Julio Argentino Roca.'¹¹	
Headquarters: Army Garrison in Bahía Blanca	
Commander: Major General José Antonio Vaquero	
Jurisdiction: Defence Zone 5: Provinces of Neuquén, Rio Negro, the south of the Province of Buenos Aires, Chubut, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego	
Military Unit	City
VI Mountain Infantry Brigade	Neuquén
IX Mechanised Infantry Brigade	Comodoro Rivadavia

Table 15: Argentine Army Command of Military Institutes¹²	
Headquarters: Army Garrison in Campo de Mayo	
Commander: Major General Santiago Omar Riveros	
Jurisdiction: Defence Zone 4: Federal Capital (City of Buenos Aires)	
Military Unit	City
School of Engineers	Escobar and Tigre
School of Communications	San Isidro
Cavalry School	General San Martín
Artillery School	San Fernando
Infantry School	Vicente López
'Sargento Carbral' NCO School	Pilar
'General Lemos' Combat Support Services School	General Sarmiento
Army Military School	Tres de Febrero
Military Intelligence School	Zárate

20mm Oerlikon Type S model 1938 guns. The Army also had an anti-aircraft defence system employing Tigercat surface-to-air missiles.

For armoured vehicles, in 1973, the Argentine Government turned to the German company Thyssen-Henschel to design a new tank to replace the old M4 Shermans of World War II vintage. The new tank was developed from the Schutzenpanzer Marder model and was known as TH-301, and in Argentina as the TAM (*Tanque Argentino Mediano*, Argentine Medium Tank). The TAM prototypes were received by the Argentine Army in 1977 and subjected to exhaustive tests, but full manufacture only began in 1979 in Argentina, so it was not available for the Beagle Conflict.

As far as trucks are concerned, in the 1970s a good number of REO M35s were modernised. The army also had large numbers of Mercedes Benz Unimog 416 and model 2624. M38A1 Jeeps and Ford M151 MUTTs were also used. In 1967, through what was known as 'Europe Plan', AMX-VCPC infantry transport vehicles and AMX-LP (DPD) bridge launchers were acquired.

Aviación del Ejército Argentino (Army Aviation)

On the other hand, the Army Aviation grew remarkably during the 1970s, as can be seen in Table 17. Its headquarters was in the Libertad Building in Buenos Aires. Its main base was in Campo de Mayo Army Garrison and was known as Army Aviation Battalion 601, with five companies: Command, General Support, Assault Helicopter, Maintenance and Service.

Gendarmería Nacional Argentina (Argentine National Gendarmerie)

In 1978, the General Commander of the Gendarmerie was the Army Brigadier General Fernando Humberto Santiago. It was a

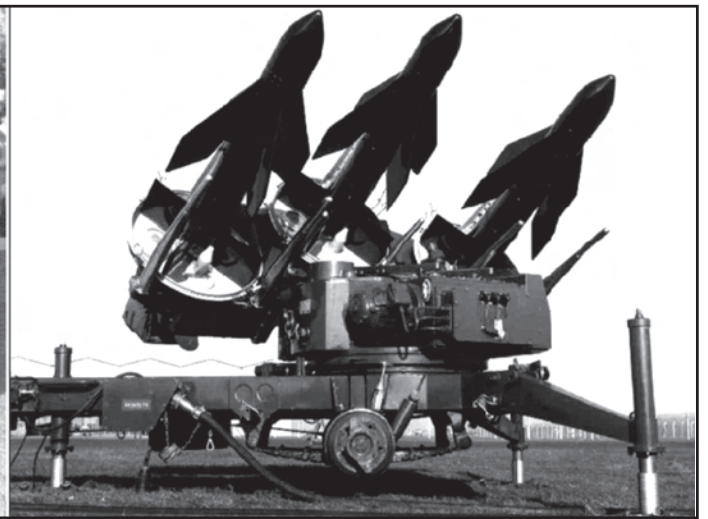
federal militarised security force. Together with the Federal Police, the Naval Coast Guard and the Airport Security Police, it constituted the Federal Security Forces of Argentina. By Law 18711 of 17



Argentine Army Infantry soldiers in manoeuvres in Patagonia in 1978. (Ejército Argentino)



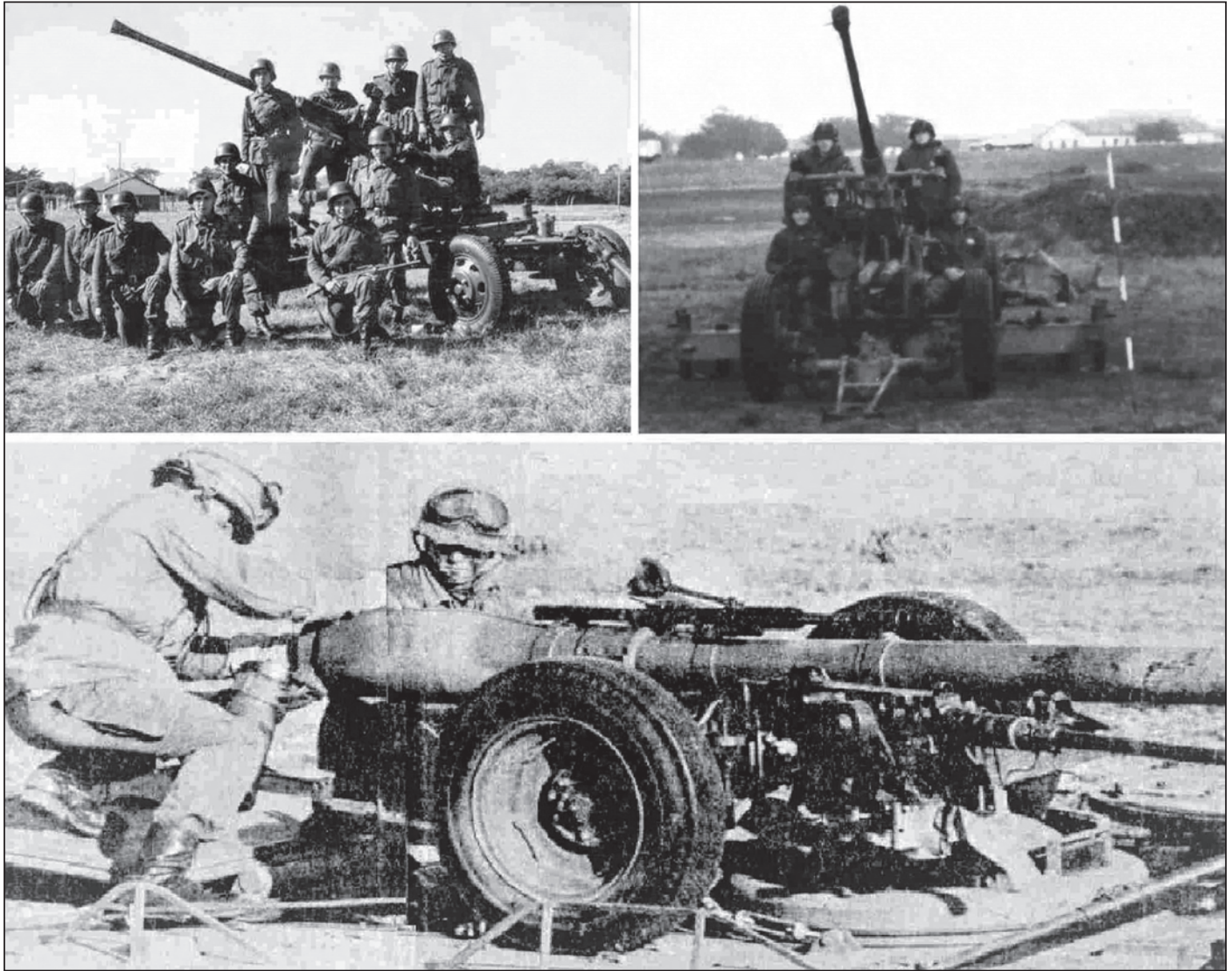
Mowag Grenadier amphibious vehicle with a 7.62mm MAG MG (top left), M-113A1 Armoured personnel carriers (top right), modernised M5A1 and M9A1 Half-track (bottom left) and an Army soldier with an M38A1 Jeep (Ejército Argentino)



Two types of missiles used by the Argentine Army: The anti-tank Cobra 2000 with its servers on a Mercedes Benz Unimog truck (left) and the Tiger Cat anti-aircraft missile system (right). (Ejército Argentino)



Various types of armoured vehicles of the Argentine Army: Sherman A4 Re-powered tank (top left), AMX-13 Modéle 58 tank with 105mm gun (top right), AML-90 Panhard armoured scout vehicle with a 90mm gun (bottom left) and AMX F3 155mm Self-Propelled gun (bottom right) (Ejército Argentino)



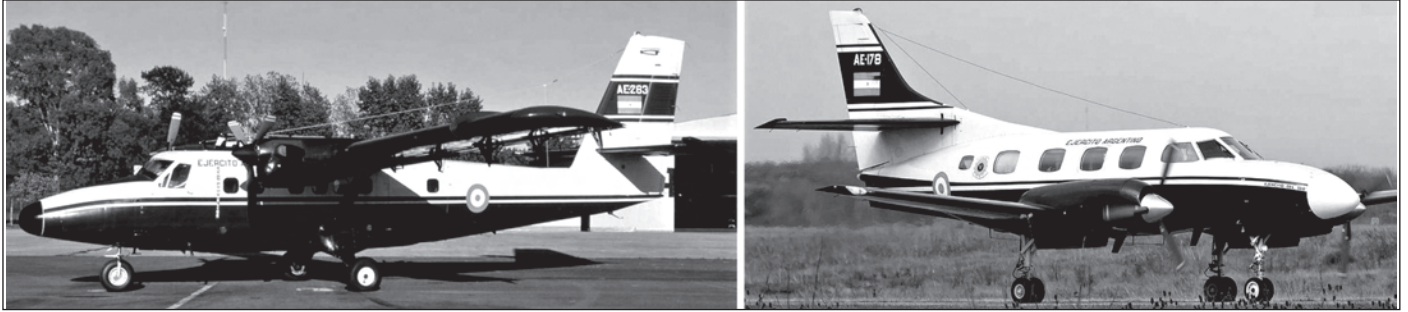
Oerlikon anti-aircraft gun servers (top photos) and a 105mm recoilless gun (bottom). (Ejército Argentino)

Table 16: Argentine Army Armoured Vehicles in Service in 1978¹

Armoured Vehicle	Number of vehicles	Year of acquisition
Re-powered Sherman M4A2/A4 tank with 105mm FTR L44/57 gun*	120	1978
AMX-13 Modèle 58 tank with 105mm gun	60	1967
AMX F3 155mm self-propelled gun	24	1967
AMX-13 VCPC armoured personnel carrier	41	1967
AMX-LP DPD Bridge launchers	2	1967
M-113A1 armoured personnel carrier	250	1967–1969
M-577A1 Command Post carrier	10	1967–1969
M-548A1 Tracked cargo carrier	12	1967–1969
AML-90 Panhard armoured scout vehicle with 90mm gun	60	1977–1978
Modernised M5A1 and M9A1 half-track**	120	1977–1978
Mowag Grenadier amphibious vehicle with a 7.62mm MAG MG	30	1967–1968
Mowag Roland amphibious vehicle with a 20mm Oerlikon AA gun	30	1967–1968
LARC-5 amphibious vehicle (VAR)	10	1972

*All the Sherman tanks of the Argentine Army were acquired in the late 1940s. 120 of them were modernised in 1978 due to the possibility of a war against Chile

**The half-tracks which were modernised in 1977-78 received either the 81mm FM reinforced mortar, a 7.62mm MAG machine gun, a 20mm Oerlikon gun or a 105mm recoilless cannon. The original petrol engine was replaced by a domestically manufactured diesel type, the FIAT CP-3/5000 (from Fiat Concord) with six cylinders in line, direct injection, 7,412cm³ and 160 HP (SAE), 145 HP (DIN)



An Army Aviation De Havilland Canada DHC-6-200 Twin Otter (left) and a Swearingen SA226T Merlin IIIA/B. (Aviación del Ejército Argentino)



An Army Aviation Aeritalia G.222. Three G.222s saw service in the Army Aviation between 1977 and 2007. (Aviación del Ejército Argentino)



Nine Aerospatiale AS330L Puma helicopters were in active service in the Army Aviation by 1978. (Aviación del Ejército Argentino)

June 1970, the Board of Commanders-in-Chief of the Argentine Revolution took over responsibility for the National Gendarmerie satisfying the needs inherent to the police power that was the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. On 25

November 1971, the regime passed a new law for the Gendarmerie by which it passed under the command of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, being the Gendarmerie Commander an Army officer with a rank not lower than a brigadier general.

The National Gendarmerie participated in *Operativo Independencia* (the fight against the guerrilla groups) in 1975, led by the Argentine Army by order of President María Estela Martínez de Perón. On 28 August of that year, the Air Force C-130E Hercules serial TC-62, carrying 114 gendarmes, was brought down by a bomb installed on the runway of Teniente Benjamín Matienzo Airport. Six gendarmes lost their lives.

During the regime of the National Reorganisation Process, which began with the coup d'état of 24 March 1976, the National Gendarmerie participated in the repression, in collaboration with the Armed Forces.

The Gendarmerie had checkpoints all over the country, with its own fleet of transport and support vehicles, including horses for areas with difficult vehicle access, a crew of dogs trained for security and rescue, and a fleet of fixed wing aircraft and of helicopters.

The Gendarmerie was divided into several directorates: Operations, Security and Defence, Aviation, Intelligence, Criminalistics and Forensic Studies, Personnel, Health, Education, Logistics, Maintenance and Training. The Gendarmerie Forces were distributed in five regions: Region I (Headquarters: Campo de Mayo, Province of Buenos Aires), Region II (Rosario, Province of Santa Fé), Region III (Córdoba, Province of Córdoba), Region IV (Salta, Province of Salta) and Region V (Bahía Blanca, Province of Buenos Aires). The Air Transport Division of the National Gendarmerie, which had its main base in Campo de Mayo, had the following aircraft on strength in 1978 (see Table 18 below):



Other helicopter types used by the Army Aviation: Bell 212 (top left), Bell UH-1H (top right), Aerospatiale AS315B Lama (bottom left) and Fairchild-Hiller FH-1100 (bottom right). (Aviación del Ejército Argentino)

Table 17: Argentine Army Aviation aircraft types in service in 1978¹⁴

Type	Number of aircraft	Role
Aeritalia G.222 (1977–2007)	3	Troop/Paratrooper transport
De Havilland DHC-6-200/300 Twin Otter (1968–Present)	3	Light transport
Beechcraft King Air 100 (1970–1994)	1	Light transport
Rockwell Sabreliner 75A (1974–2014)	1	VIP Transport
Cessna 550 Citation 1 (1977–2008)	1	VIP Transport
Beechcraft 65 Queen Air B-80 (1967–Present)	4	Light transport
Swearingen SA226T Merlin IIIA/B (1977–Present)	4	Light transport
Cessna 207 Skywagon (1976–Present)	8	Light transport
Cessna U.17A Skywagon (1957–1998)	11	Liaison
Cessna T-41D Mescalero (1974–Present)	5	Primary trainer/ Liaison
Aerospatiale AS330L Puma (1978–1997)	9	Troop transport
Bell UH-1H Huey (1970–Present)	26	Troop transport
Bell 205A-1 (1978–2007)	8	Troop transport
Bell 212 (1976–Present)	1	Troop transport
Agusta A.109A Hirundo (1978–2006)	9	Utility helicopter/ light attack
Aerospatiale AS315B Lama (1975–Present)	6	Utility helicopter/SAR
Fairchild-Hiller FH.1100 (1968–1980)*	7	Trainer/observation

*Two were transferred to the Gendarmería Nacional in 1976.



An Argentine Army Aviation Beechcraft 65 Queen Air B-80 (left) (Aviación del Ejército Argentino) and an Agusta A-109 Hirundo armed with rocket launchers. (Carlos Abella)



Somewhere near Los Andes mountain range, gendarmes carrying out exercise tasks. (Gendarmería Nacional Argentina)



Gendarmes from Squadron 31 carrying out reconnaissance tasks in the Las Lajas area. (Gendarmería Nacional Argentina)



Three types of aircraft used by the Argentine National Gendarmerie Aviation: from left to right, Cessna U206, Cessna 182H Skylane and Cessna 337 Super Skymaster. (Gendarmería Nacional Argentina)



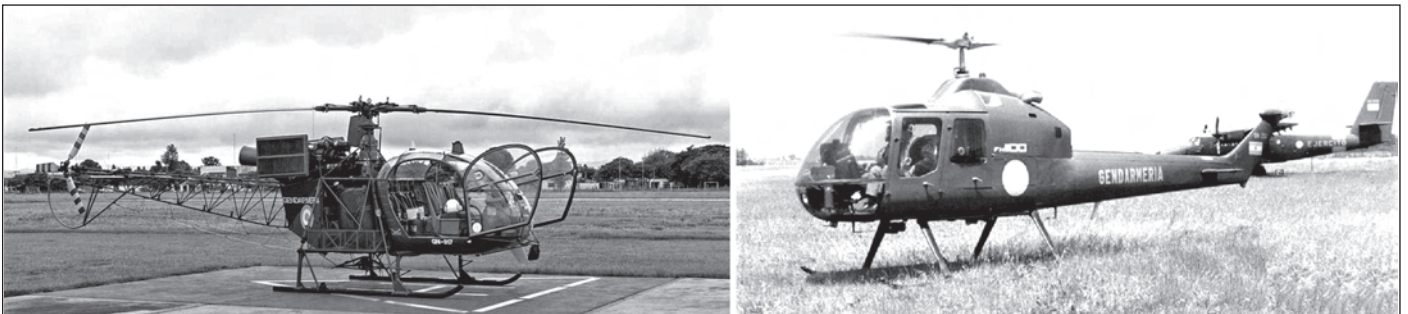
A mobile radio post of Squadron 18 of the Gendarmerie in the area of Las Lomitas. (Gendarmería Nacional Argentina)



A Pilatus PC-6 Turbo Porter of the Argentine National Gendarmerie. In 1978, the Gendarmerie had six PC-6s. (Gastón D. Hernández)

Table 18: Argentine National Gendarmerie aircraft types in service in 1978¹⁵

Type/Years of service	Number of aircraft	Role
Cessna 182H Skylane (1965–Present)	6	Border Patrol/Liaison/Trainer
Cessna 185A Skywagon (1962–1986)	1	Trainer
Cessna U206 Super Skywagon (1974–Present)	3	Border Patrol/Liaison
Cessna 210 Centurion (1962–1979)	1	Border Patrol/Liaison
Cessna 310G/H (1962–1986)	2	Border Patrol/Liaison
Cessna 337 Super Skymaster (1965–1986)	2	Border Patrol/Liaison
Cessna 402 Utililiner (1976–1994)	1	VIP Transport
Piper PA-18 Super Cub (1968–Present)	3	Trainer/Light transport
Piper PA-23-250 Aztec (1973–Present)	4	Trainer/Light transport
Piper PA-31-310B Navajo (1975–Present)	3	Border Patrol/Transport
Piper PA-31T Cheyenne II (1975–Present)	1	Border Patrol/Transport
Pilatus PC-6/B2-H2 Turbo Porter (1978–Present)	6	Border Patrol/Transport
Faichild-Hiller FH-1100 (1976–1985)	2	Trainer/SAR
Bell 47G-3B-1 Sioux (1967–1984)	2	Trainer/SAR
Aerospatiale SA-315B Lama (1978–2009)	3	Border Patrol/SAR
Gendarmerie aircraft had the registration GN- plus the serial number.		



A Gendarmerie Aerospatiale SA-315B Lama (left) and a Fairchild-Hiller FH-1100 (right). (Gendarmería Nacional Argentina)

THE CHILEAN ARMED FORCES IN 1978

Fuerza Aérea de Chile (Chilean Air Force)

The Commander-in-Chief of the FACH in 1978 was Air General José Gustavo Leigh Guzmán. He had been appointed on 17 August 1973, remaining in post until 24 July 1978. Leigh Guzmán was replaced by Air General Fernando Matthei Aubel, who remained as Commander-in-Chief until 31 July 1991. There were also a General Secretariat and a General Audit. The FACH General Staff had four directorates: Operations, Logistics, Telecommunications and Finance, which are all located in Santiago de Chile.

Table 19: FACH Wing Nr.1 ¹	
Headquarters: Cerro Moreno Air Base in Antofagasta	
Unit	Aircraft
Aviation Group Nr.7	15 Northrop F-5E Tiger II 03 Northrop F-5F Tiger II
Aviation Group Nr.8	06 Hawker Mk.71 Hunter 03 Hawker Mk.71A Hunter 03 Hawker Mk.72 Hunter 06 De Havilland DH-115 Vampire
Aviation Group Nr.9	12 Hawker Mk.71 Hunter 01 Hawker Mk.71A Hunter
Liaison Squadron	02 Douglas C-47 01 Cessna T-41A 02 Sikorsky S-55T
Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group Nr.21	30 mounts of four .50 MGs 10 mounts of three 20mm HS.820 guns 17 mounts of two .50 MGs

Table 20: FACH Wing Nr.2 ²	
Headquarters: Quintero Air Base in Quintero	
Unit	Aircraft
Aviation Group Nr.2	05 Grumman HU-16B/ASW Albatross 03 Grumman CSR-110/SAR Albatross 01 Sikorsky S-55T
Aviation Group Nr.11	09 Beechcraft 99A Airliner
Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group Nr.22	18 mounts of one .50 MG 04 mounts of four .50 MGs

Table 21: FACH Wing Nr.3 ³	
Headquarters: Bahía Catalina and Chabunco Air Bases in Punta Arenas	
Unit	Aircraft
Aviation Group Nr.6	04 Douglas C-47
Aviation Group Nr.12	08 Cessna A-37B Dragonfly
Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group Nr.23	17 mounts of one .50 MG 08 mounts of four .50 MGs 07 mounts of two 20mm HS.804 guns

The Air Force had three Commands:

Combat Command: In early 1978, the FACH was organised in six wings as follows (see Tables 19 to 25 below),

In June 1977, the FACH Instruction Directorate proceeded to create two tactical units in order to guarantee the most efficient use of second-line air resources. The first tactical unit was subordinated to a new Wing, Number 6, with bases in Calama and Victoria and comprised Aviation Groups 14, 15 and 17 (see Table 24). The second tactical unit was subordinated to Wing Number 4 based in Iquique and comprised Aviation Group 16.

During the enlistment of the FACH air fleet due to the worsening of diplomatic relations with Argentina, it was decided that practically all types of aircraft receive tactical camouflage, not only combat aircraft, which in fact they already had, but also training aircraft, transport and helicopters.

Table 22: FACH Wing Nr.4 ⁴	
Headquarters: Los Cóndores and Alto Hospicio Air Bases in Iquique	
Unit	Aircraft
Aviation Group Nr.1	15 Cessna A-37B Dragonfly
Aviation Group Nr.4	10 Cessna A-37B Dragonfly 09 Neiva T-25 Universal 01 Sikorsky S-55T
Aviation Group Nr.16	04 Cessna T-41A 03 Cessna L-19A 01 Cessna 182 (L-18) 01 Cessna 206 Super Skywagon 01 Beechcraft C.50 Twin Bonanza
Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group Nr.24	40 mounts of four .50 MG 09 mounts of three 20mm HS.820 guns

Table 23: FACH Wing Nr.5 ⁵	
Headquarters: El Tepual Air Base in Puerto Montt	
Unit	Aircraft
Aviation Group Nr.5	08 De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter 01 Sikorsky S-55T
Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group Nr.25	04 mounts of four .50 MG

Table 24: FACH Wing Nr.6 ⁶	
Headquarters: Calama and Victoria Air Bases	
Unit	Aircraft
Aviation Group Nr.14	16 Cessna T-37B/C Tweety Bird
Aviation Group Nr.15	16 Beechcraft B45/T-34 Mentor
Aviation Group Nr.17	09 Beechcraft B45/T-34 Mentor



A FACH Northrop F-5F Tiger II in 1978. (FACH via Claudio Cáceres Godoy)



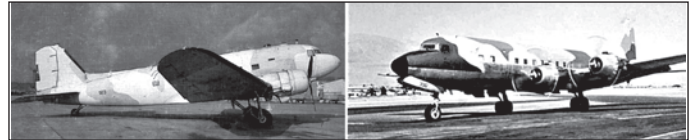
Impressive flight line of the Hawker Hunter FGA Mk.71/FR Mk.71A of the Chilean Air Force. (FACH)



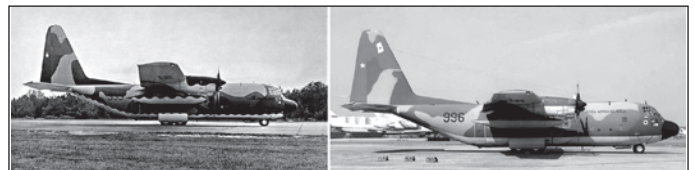
A pair of Cessna A-37B Dragonfly of the Chilean Air Force. (Dick Lohuis Collection)



Beechcraft T-34A Mentor primary trainers in the original bare metal colour scheme (left) and the tactical camouflage received during the 1978 Beagle Conflict (right). (Rino Poletti & FACH)



All transport aircraft received a tactical camouflage, including the last Douglas C-47s in service (left) and also the Douglas DC-6B Liftmasters (right). (FACH)



The first two Lockheed C-130H Hercules of the Chilean Air Force. (FACH)



The Chilean Air Force still had five Grumman UH-16B Albatross aircraft for ASW duties in 1978. (FACH)



The last Vampire fighters of the FACH still in service in 1978. (FACH)

The Chilean Air Force had the following permanent Air Bases: Los Cóncores (Iquique), Cerro Moreno (Antofagasta), Quintero (Quintero), El Bosque (Santiago), Pudahuel (Santiago), Los Cerrillos (Santiago), Maquehue (Temuco), El Tepual (Puerto Montt), Chabunco (Punta Arenas), and Teniente Marsh (Antarctic Territory). It also had some deployment bases in Zapiga, Canchones (Pozo Almonte) and Punta Arenas.

For the protection of Chilean airspace, in 1974 a Texas Instrument ASR-7 radar had been acquired for civil aeronautical traffic but also as secondary military surveillance radar thanks to its IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) system. This equipment was installed near Antofagasta, in the north of the country. It was in the charge of the Communications and Electronics Group Nr.31 of the FACH. In addition, Israeli ELTA EL/M-2205 radars were purchased, which entered service in mid-1976, also being installed in Northern

Table 25: Fach Other Units⁷		
Unit	Base	Aircraft
Aviation Group Nr.3	Temuco	12 Bell UH-1H 03 Hiller UH-12SL4 03 Hiller UH-12E 01 Bell 47D-1 01 Cessna 182 (L-18)
Aviation Group Nr.10	Los Cerrillos (Santiago)	01 Douglas C-47 Skytrain 05 Douglas DC-6B Liftmaster 02 Lockheed C-130H Hercules 01 Bell UH-1H 01 Aerospatiale SA.330F Puma
Aerophotogrametric Service (SAF)	Los Cerrillos (Santiago)	02 Gates Learjet 35A 03 De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter 01 Beechcraft A.100 King Air
Aviation School	El Bosque (Santiago)	32 Beechcraft B45/T-34A Mentor 28 Cessna T-37B/C Tweety Bird
School of Specialties	El Bosque (Santiago)	04 Cessna T-41A Mescalero 01 Cessna 182 Skylane (L-18) 01 Cessna 206 Super Skywagon 01 Beechcraft C50 Twin Bonanza
Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment	Colina (north of Santiago)	08 mounts of one .50 MG 14 mounts of four .50 MGs 01 mount of three 20mm HS.820 guns 01 mount of two 20mm HS.804 guns.

Table 26: Chilean Air Force Aviation Groups and aircraft types⁸	
Aviation Group	Aircraft
1	Cessna A-37B Dragonfly, Cessna T-37B/C Tweety Bird
2	Grumman HU-16B Albatross, Sikorsky S.55, Aeropastiale SA.315B Lama, Bell 47D, Hiller UH-12E, Bell UH-1H, Beech 99A Petrel, DHC-6 Twin Otter
3	Aerospatiale SA.315B Lama, Bell UH-1D/H, Bell 47D-1, Hiller UH-12E
4	Cessna A-37B Dragonfly, Sikorsky S.55
5	Neiva T-25 Universal, DHC-6 Twin Otter, Sikorsky S.55
6	DHC-6 Twin Otter
7	Northrop F-5E/F Tiger II
8	Hawker Hunter, D.H.115 Vampire, Douglas C-47, Sikorsky S.55
9	Hawker Hunter
10	Douglas DC-6B, Lockheed C-130H, Learjet 35A, Sikorsky S.55, Bell UH-1D/H, SA.330F Puma
11	Beechcraft 99A Petrel/Skua
12	Cessna A-37B Dragonfly
14	Cessna T-37B/C Tweety Bird
15	Beechcraft B45/T-34A Mentor
16	Cessna T-41A/D, Cessna L-19A, Cessna 182, Cessna 206, Beechcraft C50 Twin Bonanza
17	Beechcraft B45/T-34A Mentor
Aviation School	Beechcraft T-34A Mentor, Cessna T-37B/C Tweety Bird
SAF	Learjet 35A, Beechcraft A.100 King Air, De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter

Table 27: Chilean Air Force aircraft types on strength in 1978⁹

Type/Years in service	Number of aircraft	Role
Northrop F-5E/F Tiger II (1976–Present)	15/3	Supersonic light fighter
Hawker Hunter F.Mk.71/FR Mk.71A/T.Mk.72 (1967–1995)	20/5/4	Fighter-bomber/attack
Cessna A.37B Dragonfly (1975–2009)	32	Light attack jet
De Havilland D.H.115 Vampire T-Mk.11/22/55 (1954–1981)	1/4/1	Fighter/advanced jet trainer
Cessna T-37B/C-1 Tweety Bird (1961–1998)	28	Jet trainer
Beechcraft B45/T-34A Mentor (1954–1987)	32	Primary trainer/light attack
Neiva N621/T-25 Universal (1976–1982)	9	Primary trainer/light attack
Douglas C-47 (1946–1980)	7	Passenger/troop/cargo transport
Douglas DC-6A/B Liftmaster (1966–1981)	5	Passenger/troop/cargo transport
Lockheed C-130H Hercules (1972–Present)	2	Troop/heavy cargo transport
Grumman UH-16B Albatross (1958–1979)	5	ASW
Grumman CSR-110 Albatross (1958–1979)	3	SAR
De Havilland Canada DHC-6-100/300 Twin Otter (1966–Present)	8/12	Light transport/Aerial Photography
Beechcraft 99A (1970–2010)	9	Light transport
Gates Learjet 35A (1976–Present)	2	Aerial photography/VIP transport
Beechcraft A.100 King Air (1978–Present)	1	Aerial Photography
Beechcraft C.50 Twin Bonanza (1956–1981)	1	Air ambulance
Beechcraft 56TC Turbo Baron (1968–1981)	1	Liaison/runway inspection
Cessna L-19A Bird Dog (1955–Present)	3	Liaison/reconnaissance/glider tug
Cessna T-41A/D Mescalero (1968–1984)	5	Liaison
Cessna 182/L-18 Skylane (1956–1981)	2	Liaison/reconnaissance
Cessna 206 Super Skywagon (1974–1980)	1	Liaison
Sikorsky S.55T (1970–1989)**	5	Utility helicopter/SAR
Aerospatiale AS315B Lama (1978–2003)	6	Utility helicopter/SAR
Aerospatiale SA330F Puma (1973–1983)	1	VIP transport
Bell UH-1H Huey (1966–Present)*	11	Light attack/troop transport
Hiller UH-12E/SL4 (1965–1982)	4/3	Utility helicopter
Bell 47D-1 (1953–1979)	1	SAR
*The FACH UH-1Hs were fitted with 12.7mm machine guns from Douglas A-26 Invaders and rocket launchers from De Havilland Vampires.		
**The FACH acquired 8 Sikorsky UH-19 Chickasaw between 1957 and 1961. In 1970, six of them were modernised with Garret Air Research TPE 331-3U-303 turbines.		

Chile. In 1978, the first ELTA EL-2106 short-range tactical radars were purchased in Israel to be used by anti-aircraft artillery, with excellent performance in detection and close early air warning, although these would not enter into service until 1979, at which time the Vatican mediation was already in full swing. In the absence of enough radar and remote sensors for airspace surveillance, the

FACH organised a large human observation, surveillance, and air alarm corps, using not only its own personnel but also that of the Army, Navy, and Carabineros. These personnel received the name of *Observadores Terrestres* (OO.TT. – Ground Observers). They were deployed in the desert, in support of Wings 1 and 4, in the vicinity of the Santiago Metropolitan Region, on the southern



FACH light transport and liaison aircraft: Cessna T-41D Mescalero (top left), Cessna L-19 Bird Dog (top right), Cessna 182 Skylane (bottom left) and Beechcraft C.50 Twin Bonanza (bottom right), all of them in tactical camouflage. (FACH)



A group of young enlisted men trained as ground observers (OO.TT.) by the Chilean Air Force in Punta Arenas in 1978 during the Beagle Conflict. (FACH)

front, to support FACH operations in Villarrica, Temuco, Puerto Montt and Coyhaique, and finally on the southern front, in the Magallanes region, on the Brunswick peninsula and the Island of Tierra del Fuego.

Since the 1940s, the FACH had been receiving American aircraft and in the 1960s British as well, but when Dr Salvador Allende took office, there was an ideological turn to the left. Although more British Hawker Hunters were acquired, 'non-traditional' suppliers were sought for the acquisition of aircraft for the FACH including the Soviet Union, which offered very advantageous credit to Chile. The USSR offered MIG-17, MIG-19 and MIG-21 interceptor fighters but those options were not accepted by the FACH because of their lower performance in comparison with western models such as the

Mirage 5 or the SAAB Draken. The Soviets also offered various types of transport aircraft, but the FACH had already acquired a pair of C-130H Hercules and continued along that route. As for the air-to-air missiles, the compatibility with the combat aircraft already in use by the FACH would need to be studied. As for training aircraft, Sweden offered the SAAB 105 and the United States the Cessna T-37 Tweety Bird, and also Cessna A-37B Dragonfly attack aircraft that were finally acquired years later. Of course, after the coup of 11 September 1973, all Soviet options were discarded, and Chile reverted to the traditional supplier, the United States, by purchasing the Northrop F-5E/F Tiger II fighters.

In 1978, the Air Transport Command (CTA) had the capacity to activate three additional Aviation Groups if needed, for the

Table 28: Commercial aircraft available for the FACH in 1978¹⁰			
Airline	Aircraft	Civil Registration / FACH serial	Aviation Group
LAN Chile	Boeing 707-330B	CC-CCG / FACH 751	71
LAN Chile	Boeing 707-330B	CC-CEA / FACH 752	71
LAN Chile	Boeing 707-351C	CC-CCK / FACH 753	71
LAN Chile	Boeing 707-342	CC-CCX / FACH 754	71
LAN Chile	Boeing 707-385C	CC-CEB / FACH 757	71
LAN Chile	Boeing 727-116	CC-CAG / FACH 761	72
LAN Chile	Boeing 727-116C	CC-CFE / FACH 762	72
LAN Chile	Boeing 727-024C	CC-CAN / FACH 763	72
LADECO	Boeing 727-078	CC-CFG / FACH 764	72
LADECO	Boeing 727-100	CC-C* / FACH 765	72
LAN Chile	Hawker Siddeley HS.748	CC-CEF / FACH 771	73
LAN Chile	Hawker Siddeley HS.748	CC-CEG / FACH 772	73
LAN Chile	Hawker Siddeley HS.748	CC-CEH / FACH 773	73
LAN Chile	Hawker Siddeley HS.748	CC-CEJ / FACH 774	73
LADECO	Douglas DC-6B	CC-CCH / FACH 781	73
LADECO	Douglas DC-6B	CC-CDK / FACH 782	73
LADECO	Douglas DC-6B	CC-CEV / FACH 783	73
LADECO	Douglas DC-6B	CC-CFH / FACH 784	73
AERONOR Chile	Fairchild F-27	CC-CBP / FACH 775	73
AERONOR Chile	Fairchild F-27	CC-CBR / FACH 776	73
AERONOR Chile	Fairchild F-27	CC-CBQ / FACH 777	73
TAXPA-LASA	Douglas DC-6B	CC-CCJ / FACH 785	73
TAXPA-LASA	Douglas DC-6B	CC-CCF / FACH 786	73
TAXPA-LASA	Douglas DC-6BF	CC-CCI / FACH 787	73
TAXPA-LASA	Curtiss C-46A	CC-CCP / FACH 791	73
Suravia	Curtiss C-46D	CC-CAT / FACH 792	73
Suravia	Curtiss C-46A	CC-CAC / FACH 793	73
Suravia	Curtiss C-46A	CC-CEX / FACH 794	73
Transglobal	Douglas DC-6B	CC-CDH / FACH 788	73
Aerocor	Douglas DC-3	CC-CBW / FACH 795	73
Aerocor	Douglas DC-3	CC-CBO / FACH 796	73
*This 727 did not yet have a civil registration when the list was made up.			

transport of troops, surveillance and border patrols. Thus, Aviation Group Nr.71 was made up of Boeing 707 from LAN Chile, Aviation Group Nr.72 with Boeing 727 from LAN Chile and LADECO, and Aviation Group Nr.73 included a group of civil aircraft including Douglas DC-6, Hawker Siddeley HS748, Fairchild F-27, Douglas DC-3 and Curtiss C-46 from small airlines (see Table 28 above):

A total of 63 civil pilots and 44 civil maintenance technicians who worked for these airlines would also be commissioned to the FACH. In addition, both LAN Chile and LADECO would make land equipment, such as elevators, forklifts, trucks, cranes, ladders, containers, pallets, pallet racks, luggage carts, generators, pushback vehicles, and tools, available to FACH.

At the end of November 1978, the FACH command ordered that Aviation Groups 72 and 73 would become responsible to Wings Nr.5 (Puerto Montt) and Nr.1 (Antofagasta) respectively. From 13 to 18 December of that year, at the climax of the Beagle crisis, LAN

Chile's 707 and 727, LADECO's 727, Fast Air's 707, TAXPA's DC-6 and Aeronor Chile's F-27 made some 30 flights to Concepción, Balmaceda and Punta Arenas, transporting around 3,000 men that were added to those that had already been deployed.

The relationship between FACH and the civil aviation has always been close. The latter was part of the so-called Air Reserve, which could be mobilised if necessary and as could all civil personnel specialised in air traffic control of the General Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGAC). Thus, the different air clubs joined the effort by making their fleets of small aircraft available to the FACH, these could be mobilised for observation tasks, aeromedical evacuation and supply from unprepared runways.

Finally, the so-called *Code Rojo 1* (Red 1) was established for combat pilots, which consisted of a high alert condition of takeoff within one minute, including aircraft with tactical load installed, in takeoff area and configuration: pilot with his harness fastened,

equipment switched on and in radio contact with the command post; pre-flight carried out, starting car connected and working; aircraft without safety pins, ready to fly.

Logistics Command included the following Divisions: Supply, Infrastructure, Development and Projects, Transport and Services, Engineering and Weapons Systems Support and ENAER (Empresa Nacional de Aeronáutica, National Aeronautics Company), all in Santiago de Chile.

Staff Command had four Divisions, all in Santiago de Chile, Education: The “Capitán Manuel Ávalos Prado” Aviation School, the “Sargento Adolfo Menadier Rojas” School of Specialties, the Air War Academy, the Aeronautical Polytechnic Academy, the NCO School and the Presentation Group (Aerobatic Team).

Health: ‘General de Brigada Aérea Doctor Raúl Yazigi’ Institutional Hospital.

Welfare.

Human Resources.

Armada de Chile (Chilean Navy)

The Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Navy in 1978 was Admiral José Toribio Merino Castro. He was appointed to the position in 1973 and remained at the head of the service until 1990.

The Chilean Navy had three naval zones in 1978:

First Naval Zone, whose headquarters was in the city of Valparaíso. Its commander was Vice Admiral Arturo Troncoso Daroch. It comprised the area between the border with Peru in the north to Punta Topocalma a few kilometres north of Pichilemu.

Second Naval Zone, with its headquarters in the city of Talcahuano. Its commander was Navy Captain Tulio Rojas Chellier. It covered the area between Punta Topocalma to the Tres Montes Peninsula in the Aysén Region.

Third Naval Zone, in the extreme south of Chile, in the city of Punta Arenas. Its commander was Rear Admiral Luis de los Ríos Echeverría. Its area of influence ranged from the Tres Montes Peninsula to the Chilean Antarctic territory.

The three naval zones corresponded to the territorial division of the Navy and had maritime, defensive and garrison functions, in addition to being the logistics bases of the Naval Forces.

The Naval Operations Command was the body that conducted the training of naval forces in peacetime and operations in wartime. This command was composed of:



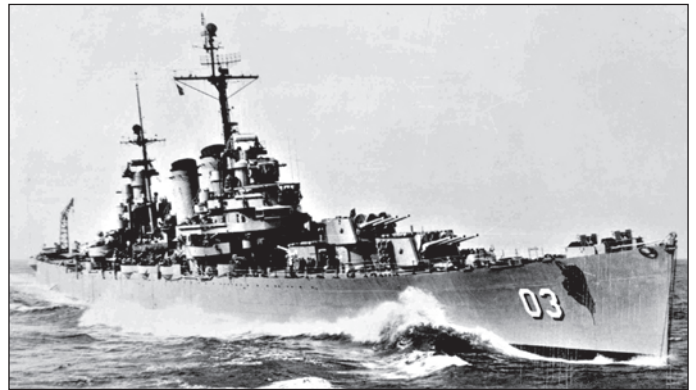
A large part of the Chilean Commercial Aviation fleet was placed at the disposal of the Chilean Armed Forces: Boeing 707 and 727 from LAN Chile (top) (Vito Cedrini & Howard Chaloner), Boeing 727 and Douglas DC-6 from LADECO (centre) (Public Domain & Michel Anciaux), Avro HS748 from LAN Chile and Fokker F-27 from Aeronor among other aircraft (bottom) (AVRO & Fernando Mesquita)



Chilean and Argentine Navy naval zones in 1978 (Author)



The Brooklyn-Class cruiser ACH *O'Higgins* (CL-02) of the Chilean Navy. It was in service for 40 years. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The Brooklyn-Class cruiser ACH *Capitán Prat* (CL-03) of the Chilean Navy. (Esteban Raczynski Collection)

The Sea Squadron (Escuadra Naval): In 1978, the Chilean Navy had three light cruisers, ten destroyers, two frigates, one Sub Chaser, two cutters, one Patrol Boat, four PT Boats, one hydrographic boat, three LSMs, two LCMs, three LSTs, four LCUs, one Polar boat, three tankers, one Hospital ship, one School Brig-Schooner, two transport boats, two Ferries, five Ocean tugs and one Submarine tender.

Table 29: Chilean Navy ships on strength in the late 1970s⁵

Type	Class	Pennant Nr.	Name	Years of service
Light Cruiser*	Brooklyn	CL-02	ACH <i>O'Higgins</i>	1951–1991
Light Cruiser*	Brooklyn	CL-03	ACH <i>Capitán Prat</i>	1951–1982
Light Cruiser*	Tre Konor	CL-04	ACH <i>Almirante Latorre</i>	1971–1986
Destroyer	Fletcher	DD-14	ACH <i>Blanco Escalada</i>	1962–1982
Destroyer	Fletcher	DD-15	ACH <i>Cochrane</i>	1962–1982
Destroyer*	Allen M. Sumner	DD-16	ACH <i>Ministro Zenteno</i>	1974–1990
Destroyer*	Allen M. Sumner	DD-17	ACH <i>Ministro Portales</i>	1974–1991
Destroyer**	Almirante	DDG-18	ACH <i>Almirante Riveros</i>	1962–1995
Destroyer**	Almirante	DDG-19	ACH <i>Almirante Williams</i>	1960–1996
Destroyer	Charles Lawrence	APD-26	ACH <i>Serrano</i>	1966–1991
Destroyer	Charles Lawrence	APD-27	ACH <i>Orella</i>	1966–1984
Destroyer	Charles Lawrence	APD-28	ACH <i>Riquelme</i>	1966–1982
Destroyer	Charles Lawrence	APD-29	ACH <i>Uribe</i>	1966–1985
Frigate* **	Leander	PFG-06	ACH <i>Almirante Condell</i>	1973–2007
Frigate* **	Leander	PFG-07	ACH <i>Almirante Lynch</i>	1974–2007
Sub Chaser	PC-1638	PCC-37	ACH <i>Papudo</i>	1971–1993

Table 29: Chilean Navy ships on strength in the late 1970s (continued)				
Cutter	Locally built	75	ACH <i>Marinero Fuentealba</i>	1966–1997
Cutter	Locally built	76	ACH <i>Cabo Odger</i>	1966–1996
Patrol Boat	Locally built	77	ACH <i>Castor</i>	1971–1996
PT Boat	Barceló	PTF-80	ACH <i>Guacolda</i>	1965–2004
PT Boat	Barceló	PTF-81	ACH <i>Fresia</i>	1965–2006
PT Boat	Barceló	PTF-82	ACH <i>Quidora</i>	1966–2001
PT Boat	Barceló	PTF-83	ACH <i>Tegualda</i>	1966–2002
Hydrographic Boat	Navajo	AGS-64	ACH <i>Yelcho</i>	1960–1996
LSM	LSM-1	LSM-92	ACH <i>Aspirante Morel 2º</i>	1960–1982
LSM	Elicura	LSM-94	ACH <i>Orompello</i>	1964–2012
LSM	Elicura	LSM-90	ACH <i>Elicura</i>	1968–Present
LCM	-	-	ACH <i>Junín</i>	1960–1978
LCM	-	-	ACH <i>Valdivia</i>	1960–1978
LST	LST-1152	LST-91	ACH <i>Águila</i>	1963–1980
LST	LST-1152	LST-89	ACH <i>Comandante Araya</i>	1973–1981
LST	LST-1152	LST-88	ACH <i>Comandante Hemmerdinger</i>	1973–1983
LCU	LCT Mk.6	LCU-98	ACH <i>Grumete Tellez</i>	1960–1986
LCU	-	LCU-97	ACH <i>Fueguina</i>	1972–1979
LCU	-	LCU-96	ACH <i>Peuca</i>	1978–1980
LCU	-	LCU-95	ACH <i>Calle Calle</i>	1978–1982
Polar Boat*	-	AP-45	ACH <i>Piloto Pardo</i>	1958–1997
School Brig-Schooner	Juan Sebastián Elcano	-	ACH <i>Esmeralda</i>	1954–Present
Tanker	Almirante Montt	-	ACH <i>Almirante Montt</i>	1956–1978
Tanker	Araucano	AO-53	ACH <i>Araucano</i>	1967–2010
Tanker	Patapsco	AOG-54	ACH <i>Beagle</i>	1972–1992
Hospital Ship	Cirujano Videla	-	ACH <i>Cirujano Videla</i>	1966–1998
Transport Boat	Aquiles	AP-47	ACH <i>Aquiles</i>	1967–1988
Transport Boat	Navarino	-	ACH <i>Navarino</i>	1978–1991
Ferry	Locally built	YFB-110	ACH <i>Meteoro</i>	1968–Present
Ferry	Locally built	YFB-116	ACH <i>Grumete Pérez</i>	1975–Present
Submarine tender	-	BMS-70	ACH <i>Angamos</i>	1977–1993
Submarine	Balao	SS-20	ACH <i>Thomson</i>	1961–1981
Submarine	Balao	SS-21	ACH <i>Simpson</i>	1962–1982
Submarine	Oberón	SS-22	ACH <i>O'Brien</i>	1976–2001
Submarine	Oberón	SS-23	ACH <i>Hyatt</i>	1977–2000
Ocean Tug	Janequeo	ATA-73	ACH <i>Colo Colo</i>	1931–1987
Ocean Tug	Maricopa	PP-60	ACH <i>Lientur</i>	1948–1986
Ocean Tug	Maricopa	PP-62	ACH <i>Lautaro</i>	1948–1991
Ocean Tug	Caupolicán	YT-127	ACH <i>Caupolicán</i>	1961–1985
Ocean Tug	Abnaki	ATF-63	ACH <i>Sargento Aldea</i>	1971–1992
*With a helicopter flight deck.				
**With Seacat and/or Exocet MM38 Missile launchers.				

The Submarine Force (Comando de Submarinos/COMSUB), with only four submarines on strength, one of them under repairs.

The Marine Corps (Comando de Infantería de Marina/CIM), informally known as *Cosacos* (Cossacks) was a combat force of the Chilean Navy. Its Commander in 1978 was Rear Admiral IM Sergio Cid Araya, who reported directly to the Commander of Naval Operations. In 1978, this body was made up of about 10,000 men.



A Mowag Grenadier amphibious vehicle of the Chilean Marine Corps descending from the LSM 90 ACH *Elicura*. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The four Barceló-Class PT boats of the Chilean Navy: PTF-81 ACH *Fresia* (PTF-81), ACH *Guacolda* (PTF-80), ACH *Quidora* (PTF-82), and ACH *Tegualda* (PTF-83). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile). *Comando de Submarinos* (COMSUB, The Submarine Force), with only four submarines on strength, one of them under repairs.



The Fletcher-Class destroyer ACH *Blanco Escalada* (DD-14). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The two Oberón-Class submarines of the Chilean Navy: the ACH *O'Brien* (SS-22; centre) and the ACH *Hyatt* (SS-23; left), together with the Balao-class ACH *Simpson* (SS-21; right) (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The Allen M. Sumner-Class destroyer ACH *Ministro Portales* (DD-17). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The Tre Konor-Class light cruiser ACH *Almirante Latorre* CL-04 of the Chilean Navy. (Esteban Raczynski Collection)



The Almirante-Class destroyer ACH *Almirante Riveros* (DD-18). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



Chilean Marine troops during manoeuvres in the south in 1978. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

Their motto was *Fortis Atque Fidelis* (Strong as well as Faithful). The Corps' main bases were: IM Concon Base (north of Valparaíso and Viña del Mar), in the city of Concón, where the Infantry Marine Detachment Nr.2 Miller was based, and IM Tumbes Base, in the city of Talcahuano, where the Infantry Marine Detachment Nr.3 Aldea was based.

In August 1978, the Marine Infantry Brigade (BRIGIM) was created, with Captain IM Pablo Wunderlich Piderit being assigned as Commander. The BRIGIM was organised as follows:

Command: with its staff and reconnaissance troops, with three sections: 020 and 021 amphibious reconnaissance and 023 mechanised reconnaissance, as well as an IM 025 commando company.

Combat Units: The IM Nr.21 Battalion, with a company of Military Police and Services Nr.210 and four rifle companies (211, 212, 213, 214), and the IM Nr.41 Battalion with a company of Military Police and Service Nr.410 and six rifle companies (411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416). The Special Forces of the Marines was made up of tactical divers and Marine Infantry Commandos.

Combat Support Units: The Field Artillery Group Nr.01, with ten 155/38mm guns, twelve 81mm LCAP batteries and thirteen 20mm ILA anti-aircraft batteries. Additionally, the combat support units also had mortars, rocket launchers and machine guns. In addition, the Logistics Battalion IM Nr.05, with an engineering company, an amphibious assault vehicles company, a field services company and a health company.

The force had a total strength of 200 officers and between 4,500 and 5,500 NCOs and men.

The Marine Corps was equipped mainly with American material, with the

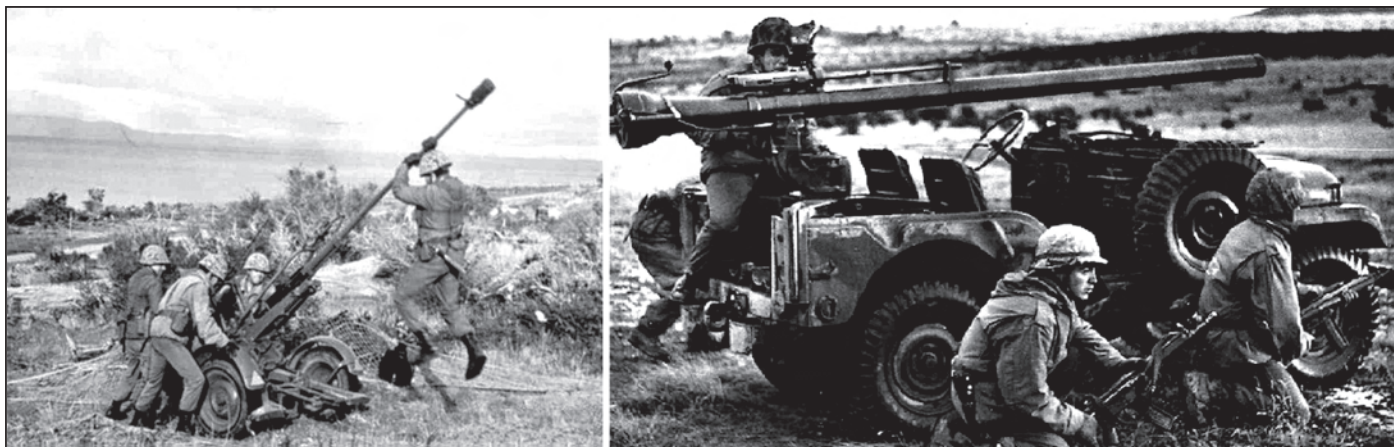


exception of five Mowag Grenadier 4x4 armoured cars, equipped with a turret housing a 20mm machine gun – and initially also included a double 81mm rocket launcher which was soon discarded – which equipped a motorised reconnaissance unit. For amphibious assault operations, the Marine Corps also had 24 amphibious LVTP-5 armoured vehicles, launched at sea from LST-type ships, which could carry 35 riflemen in addition to their three crew members. Besides, they also counted on 2 LVTR-1 recovery vehicles. Company-level fire support elements were equipped with 60mm and 81mm mortars, while battalion-level 105mm guns were available for fire support and 40mm guns for anti-air defence. As the crisis worsened, with a certain potential to lead to a military clash, the formation of the Marine Corps Brigade included the deployment of a number of 155mm M114 cannons.

The Marine infantry was able to acquire weapons, equipment, and war materiel from Israel, South Korea, South Africa, and India, given the limitations of the “Kennedy Amendment”, which prevented acquisitions in the United States and other countries where U.S. weapons and equipment were manufactured under licence. Thus, it was possible to acquire MG42 machine guns, Intalaza 88.9mm A/T rocket launchers and 106mm CRS M-40 106mm calibre recoilless



Chilean Marines removing a recoilless gun from an LVT-5 amphibious vehicle with the help of a Jeep. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



Chilean Marines deploying an Oerlikon GAI B01 20mm anti-aircraft gun (left). A 105mm recoilless gun mounted on a Jeep belonging to Nr.41 Marine Infantry Battalion, IM Cochrane Detachment, Punta Arenas. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

gun from Spain, as well as Zodiac Mk.V rubber boats, Mahindra brand Jeep-type tactical vehicles from India, as well as second-hand 6x6 1.5 ton-trucks and 4x4 3/4 ton-trucks, for logistics deployment. In Singapore, 60mm and 81mm Soltam Tampella mortars were purchased, with the corresponding ammunition, and from South Korea, complete combat clothing in olive green and DPM camouflage, M65 jackets, thermal underwear, combat boots and helmets.

The Marine Corps' main anti-tank vehicle was the 4x4 M38 Jeep equipped with a 105mm recoilless gun, which were supplemented at platoon level by U.S. M1 bazookas. The Chilean Marine Infantry units had between 4,500 and 5,500 troops distributed across the disputed islands – Picton, Nueva and Lennox and Navarino Island, where the defences were reinforced with coastal cannons – and other coastal points of maritime importance in the Beagle Channel. The bulk of the Amphibious Brigade was ready on Dawson Island. As for light weapons, the Marines possessed G3, HK-33, and M16A-1 assault rifles, as well as M1 Garand carbines. They also had Czech ZB-53, Heckler & Kosh 21, Hotchkiss, M2 and Browning M1 machine guns. Regarding artillery, the Corps had 18 Oerlikon-Contraves 35mm anti-aircraft guns, 24 recoilless M-40 guns, 8 M30

Table 30: Chilean Naval Aviation Squadrons¹¹

Squadron	Aircraft
Instruction Squadron 1 (VT-1)	Beechcraft T-34B Mentor
Helicopter Squadron 1 (HU-1)	Bell 206B Sea Ranger
ASW Squadron 1 (HS-1)	Bell SH-57A Sea Ranger
ASW Squadron 2 (HS-2)	Aerospatiale SA-319B Alouette III
Air Maritime Exploration Squadron 1 (VP-1)	Embraer EMB-111AN Bandeirulha
General Purpose Squadron 1 (VC-1)	Embraer EMB-110CN Bandeirante Piper PA-31 Navajo Cessna 337 Skymaster Beechcraft D.18S Douglas C-47 CASA C.212-100 Aviocar



Two Beechcraft T-34B Mentor of the Chilean Naval Aviation. Six Mentors were in service between 1966 and 1980. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



An Embraer EMB.111AN/C-111 Bandeirante Patrulha (left) and an Embraer EMB.110CN/C-95 Bandeirante (right) of the Chilean Naval Aviation. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

Table 31: Chilean Naval Aviation aircraft types in service in 1978¹²		
Type/Years in service	Number of aircraft	Role
Beechcraft T-34B Mentor (1966–1980)	6	Primary trainer
Embraer EMB.111AN/C-111 Bandeirante Patrulha (1978–Present)	3	Maritime air patrol
Embraer EMB.110CN/C-95 Bandeirante (1976–1991)	3	Transport
Piper PA-31 Navajo (1972–1985)	1	Air Photography/ Light transport
Cessna 337 Skymaster (1977–1980)	1	Light transport
Beechcraft D.18S/TC-45 (1954–1978)	1	Light transport
Douglas C-47 Dakota (1969–1980)	4	Troop & Cargo transport
CASA C.212-100 Aviocar (1978–2012)	4	Troop & Cargo transport
Aerospatiale SA-319B Alouette III (1977–1991)	10	Light attack/ASW
Bell 206B/SH-57A Sea Ranger (1970–2022)	4	Utility helicopter/ASW
Sikorsky SH-34J Seabat (1962–1972)*	2	Utility helicopter/ASW
*Although withdrawn from service, at least one of the SH-34Js was still in flying condition in 1978 as a back-up helicopter.		



Four CASA C.212-100 were in service with the VC-1 Squadron of the Chilean Naval Aviation between 1978 and 2012. (Michel Anciaux)



Only two Sikorsky SH-34J Seabat saw service in the Chilean Naval Aviation between 1962 and 1972. Although withdrawn from service in the early 1970s, at least one of them was made airworthy as a back-up helicopter during the Beagle crisis in 1978. (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)



The two main types of helicopters in service with the Chilean Naval Aviation: Aerospatiale SA-319B Alouette III (left) and Bell 206B/SH-57A Sea Ranger (right). (Archivo Histórico de la Armada de Chile)

heavy mortars, 50 Instalaza M65 rocket launchers and Mamba anti-tank missiles. There were also 16 155mm Puteux GPF Mobile Coastal Guns and 24 152mm Vickers Coastal Guns.

The Naval Aviation, constituted the helicopter and aircraft unit of the Chilean Navy whose mission was to provide support to naval surface, submarine and Marine Corps forces. Its aircraft carried out aero maritime, electronic, anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare tasks, through the use of missiles and torpedoes and surveillance of the Territorial Sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone. The Naval Aviation had six squadrons.

The Directorate of Education of the Navy was the body whose mission was to train the personnel of the service, which it did at establishments divided into three levels:

Basic Naval Education carried out in its two parent schools, the Arturo Prat Naval School for officers and the Alejandro Navarrete Cisterna Cabin Crew School for NCOs.

Specialised Naval Education carried out through the Naval Polytechnic Academy in its three faculties: Weapons Systems, Engineering and Logistics Systems, and Operational Support Systems.

Higher Naval Education was carried out at the Naval War Academy.

Ejército de Chile (Chilean Army)

The Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army in 1978 was Captain General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte – he had been appointed on 23 August 1973. He led the coup against President Salvador Allende on 11 September 1973 with the commanders of the Navy, Air Force and Carabineros. Immediately afterwards, the *de facto* government was assumed by a Military Junta headed by Pinochet. He remained in office until 11 March 1990, when after democratic elections he was replaced by Patricio Aylwin. Pinochet, however, remained as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army until 10 March 1998, when he was replaced by Lieutenant General Ricardo Izurieta Caffarena.

As regards the organisation of the Army; Supreme Command was composed of the General Staff Command, the Education and Doctrine Command, the Force Support Command, the Ground Operations Command, the Industry and Engineering Command and the General Command of the Army Garrison of the Metropolitan Region. Command was assisted by: The General Secretariat of the Army, the General Auditor of the Army, the Comptroller General of the Army, and the Advisory Academic Council for Military Studies and Research.

1. **The General Staff Command** had different directorates: Culture and History, Personnel, Operations, Finance, International Relations, Intelligence, Logistics, Projects and Research.

2. **The Education and Doctrine Command** included the following academies and schools:

- The War Academy of the Chilean Army, located in La Reina to the east of the capital.
- The Military Polytechnic Academy, also located in La Reina.

The Military schools were:

- Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins Military Officer School, located in the Las Condes district, Santiago.
- Sargento Daniel Rebolledo Sepúlveda NCO School, located in Maipú.

The Weapons schools were:

- Infantry School, located in San Bernardo, south of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago.
- Artillery School, located in the city of Linares.
- Armoured Cavalry School located in the city of Iquique.
- School of Military Engineers, located in Tejas Verdes.
- School of Telecommunications, located in the Peñalolén district, in the foothills of Santiago.

The specialty schools were:

- Army Mountain School that had its facilities in the Andes mountain range very close to the town of Portillo.



Chilean Army soldiers with Mauser rifles posing with the officer in charge. (Ejército de Chile)



Chilean Army Infantry troops. (Ejército de Chile)

- School for Paratroopers and Special Forces in the district of Colina.
- Intelligence School located in Santiago.
- Army Riding School located in Quillota.
- School of Services and Physical Education located in the city of Santiago.
- Army Aviation School located in Santiago, in the Army Aviation Command.

3. **The Force Support Command** was in charge of the Army Logistics, with three regiments located in Santiago: Nr.1 Bella Vista, Nr.2 Arsenales de Guerra and Nr.3 Limache; the Engineering, Infrastructure, Telecommunications and Maintenance Commands.

4. **The Military Industry and Engineering Command**, which included the Military Geographic Institute, the Research and Control Institute and the Army's Chemical Industrial Complex, and the factories of the Chilean Army in Arica, Pozo Almonte, Antofagasta, Talagrande, and Magallanes.

5. **The General Command Army Garrison in the Metropolitan Region**, with the Presidential Escort Regiment Nr.1 Granaderos in Quillota and the Military Police Regiment Nr.1 Santiago in the capital.

6. **Ground Operations Command** had six Army Divisions (see Tables 32 to 37 below):

The effectives of the Chilean Army had the following light weapons: Austrian Mauser Steyr Chilean Model 1912 (for training and second-line troops) and the American Garand M1 rifles (first line troops), in addition to the Swiss SIG 510-4, the Brazilian manufactured IMBEL M964 FAL and the Portuguese manufactured INDEP H&K G-3 FMP assault rifles (all of them for first line

Table 32: First Army Division ¹³	
Headquarters: Antofagasta	
Commander: General Julio Canessa Robert	
Jurisdiction: Regions of Antofagasta and Atacama	
Military Unit	City
Motorised Brigade Nr.1 Calama	Calama
Nr.23 Infantry Regiment Copiapó	Copiapó
Logistics Regiment Nr.1 Tocopilla	Antofagasta
Army Aviation Platoon Nr.1	Antofagasta



A Chilean soldier with an M20A1 Super-Bazooka. (Ejército de Chile)

Table 33: Second Army Division ¹⁴	
Headquarters: Santiago de Chile	
Commander: General Enrique Morel Donoso	
Jurisdiction: Regions of Coquimbo, Valparaíso, Metropolitan, O'Higgins and Maule.	
Military Unit	City
Nr.1 Infantry Regiment Bruin	Santiago
Nr.2 Infantry Regiment Maipo	Valparaíso
Nr.6 Infantry Regiment Chacabuco	Concepción
Nr.16 Infantry Regiment Talca	Talca
Nr.18 Infantry Regiment Guardia Vieja	Los Andes
Nr.19 Infantry Regiment Cochagua	San Fernando
Nr.21 Infantry Regiment Arica	La Serena
Nr.22 Infantry Regiment Lautaro	Rancagua
Motorised Brigade Maule	Concepción
Nr.2 Armoured Regiment	Santiago
Nr.1 Artillery Regiment Tacna	Santiago
Army Aviation Platoon Nr.2	Santiago

Table 34: Third Army Division ¹⁵	
Headquarters: Valdivia	
Commander: General Rigoberto Rubio Ramírez	
Jurisdiction: Regions of Bio Bio, Araucanía, Los Ríos and Los Lagos	
Military Unit	City
Mountain School of the Army	Los Andes
Mountain Detachments	Los Andes/ Temuco/Los Ángeles
Nr.3 Cavalry Regiment Húsares	Angol
Divisional Logistics Regiment Nr.3 Victoria	Victoria
Communications Battalion Nr.4 Membrillar	Valdivia
Intelligence Company Nr.3	Puerto Varas
Nr.12 Infantry Regiment Sangra	Puerto Varas
Nr.8 Infantry Regiment Tucapel	Temuco
Nr.3 Mountain Infantry Regiment Los Ángeles	Los Ángeles
Army Aviation Platoon Nr.3	Valdivia

Table 35: Fourth Army Division ¹⁶	
Headquarters: Coyhaique	
Jurisdiction: Region of Aysén.	
Military Unit	City
Motorised Detachment Nr.14 Aysén	Coyhaique
Nr.8 Infantry Regiment Chiloé	Puerto Aysén
Army Aviation Platoon Nr.4	Aysén

troops). For machine guns the Army had the MG-42/58 (M1A1), ZB 5/Vz.37, Browning M1919A1, and FM MAG model 60-20. The Chilean Army also had the Super-Bazooka M20A1 and the Instalaza model 53 rocket launchers. Two models of ant-tank guns were in use, the 37mm M3 and the recoilless 105mm M40. The Chilean Army also had the Oerlikon-Contraves/Bölkow GmbH Mamba wire-guided anti-tank missiles.

Table 36: Fifth Army Division¹⁷

Headquarters: Punta Arenas	
Commander: General Nilo Floody Buxton	
Jurisdiction: Regions of Magallanes and the Chilean Antarctica	
Military Unit	City
Nr.5 Armoured (Cavalry) Detachment Lanceros	Puerto Natales
Nr.10 Infantry Regiment Pudeto	Punta Arenas
Motorised Detachment Nr.11	Porvenir
Nr.14 Infantry Regiment Caupolicán	Porvenir
Divisional Logistics Regiment Nr.5 Magallanes	Punta Arenas
Army Aviation Platoon Nr. 5	Punta Arenas

Table 37: Sixth Army Division¹⁸

Headquarters: Iquique	
Commander: General Guillermo Toro Dávila	
Jurisdiction: Regions of Tarapacá, Arica and Parinacota	
Military Unit	City
Motorised Brigade Nr.4 Rancagua	Arica
Nr.4 Infantry Regiment Rancagua	Arica
Motorised Brigade Nr.24 Huamachuco	Putre
Logistics Regiment Nr.6 Pisagua	Arica
Communications Battalion Nr.6 Tarapacá	Pozo Almonte
Army Aviation Platoon Nr.6	Arica



Soldiers of the Chilean Army in the south during the harsh winter of 1978 practising with a mortar, under the watchful eye of the officer in charge. (Ejército de Chile)

For artillery, the Chilean Army had 70 105mm M101/M2A1 light howitzers, 36 SOLTAM M-68 howitzers and 36 105mm Otto Melara Model 56 mountain howitzers. For anti-aircraft weapon systems, the Chilean Army had a good number of 20mm Oerlikon GAI B01 guns. All this was supplemented with 120mm mortars acquired from Israel.

The Chilean Army had 100 Engesa EE-15 1.5-ton troop transport trucks, acquired from Brazil in 1975. Additionally, and quite ironically, it also had a good number of Argentine-manufactured Mercedes Benz Unimog trucks. There were also Land Rover Santana 88 acquired from the United Kingdom in 1962, and M38 and Ford Mutt Jeeps. Some 20 4x4 vehicles were equipped



Some Chilean officers pose with an AC 155-38mm battery located in Pitinani. (Ejército de Chile)

Table 38: Chilean Army armoured vehicles on strength in 1978¹⁹

Armoured vehicle	Number of vehicles	Year of acquisition
White M3A1 Scout exploration vehicle	15	1943
M3A1 Stuart light tank with a 37mm gun*	17	1943
M3A1/2 Half-Track	17	1943
M4A1 Sherman medium tank with a 75mm M3 gun	17	1952
M32 ARV 'Panchotes' tank recovery vehicle	3	1952
M24 Chaffee light tank with a 75mm M6 gun	21	1963
M41A1/A3 Walker Bulldog tank with a 76mm M32 gun	60	1964
M578 ARV tank recovery vehicle	3	1970
M113A1 Armoured personnel transport	60	1970
AMX F3 155mm Self-Propelled gun	12	1974
Engesa EE-09 Mk.II/III Cascavel armoured recce vehicle with a 90mm gun	83	1975
Engesa EE-11 Urutú armoured personnel transport	37	1975
*Officially withdrawn from service in 1975, although some were still in service for training purposes		



A Land Rover Santana 88 all-terrain vehicle of the Chilean Army. (Ejército de Chile)



Chilean Army M4A1 Sherman medium tanks with a 75mm M3 gun. (Ejército de Chile)



Ensigns of the Chilean Army posing with M4A1 Sherman tanks and M113A1 armoured cars from the Armoured School in La Negra sector, Antofagasta in 1975. (Ejército de Chile)



Chilean Army armoured reconnaissance cars Engesa EE-09 Mk.II/III Cascavel with a 90mm gun and Engesa EE-11 Urutú armoured personnel transports. The front Urutú in the picture has been converted into an ambulance. (Ejército de Chile)

with a M40 recoilless anti-tank guns and were deployed to the southern zone in 1978.

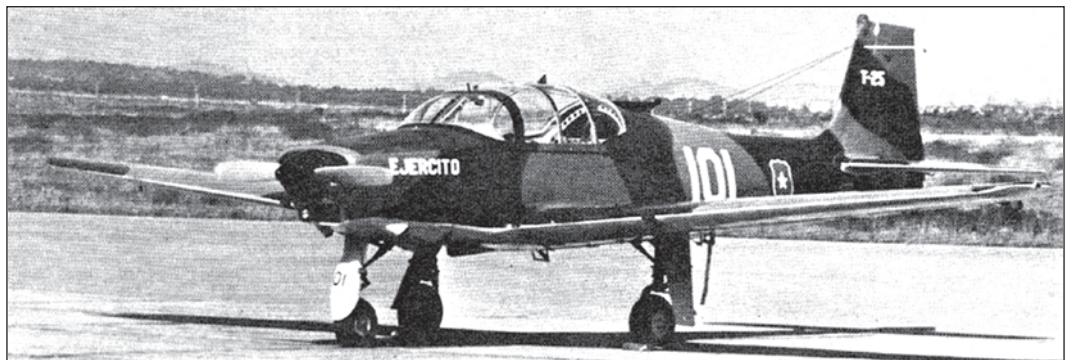
7. **Comando de Aviación del Ejército/CAVE** (The Army Aviation Command), with its headquarters in the 'Eulogio Sánchez Errázuriz' Aerodrome, popularly known as the Tobalaba Airport, in La Reina, Santiago de Chile. The CAVE had a total of six Aviation platoons in the cities of Antofagasta, Santiago, Valdivia, Coyhaique, Punta Arenas and Iquique.



An Army Aviation Cessna R172K Hawk XP II. Eighteen 172s saw service in the Army as primary trainers and in Liaison duties between 1978 and 2013. (Ejército de Chile)

Carabineros de Chile (Police)

By 1973, Inspector General César Mendoza Durán was serving as head of the Police Welfare Directorate, finding himself in eighth place on the institutional ladder. After being contacted by the Air Force General Gustavo Leigh on 10 September of that year, he joined the plan to overthrow the President of the Republic



A Neiva T-25 Universal of the Chilean Army Aviation. In 1978 all T-25s were handed over to the FACH (Ejército de Chile)



Piper PA-32-260 Cherokee Six serial 101 of the Chilean Army Aviation in La Serena in 1974 (Michel Anciaux)



A Bell 206B Jet Ranger of the Chilean Army. In the back, several Puma helicopters also from the Army can be seen. The picture was taken at Tobalaba Airport near Santiago (Michel Anciaux)



In the 1970s, the Chilean Army used five Bell UH-1Hs. In 1978, the UHs were ceded to the FACH. (Michel Anciaux)

Salvador Allende. During the coup d'état of 11 September, he was in the Carabineros Communications Centre. From there he directed the uprising of the institution, displacing José María Sepúlveda, who was in the La Moneda Palace supporting President Allende, from the position of Director General of Carabineros.

After the coup, César Mendoza Durán was appointed Director General of Carabineros. Unlike the Argentine Military Junta, the

Chilean Junta included the Commander of Carabineros. He remained in office until 2 August 1985, being replaced then by Rodolfo Stange. Until 1973, Carabineros de Chile answered to the Ministry of the Interior, but in 1974 it became responsible to the Ministry of National Defence. One notable aspect that was unlike other police forces across the world, the Chilean carabineros wore a green uniform. The Chilean Army, because of the German influence throughout the twentieth century, used a grey uniform.

In June 1978, three squads of 125 student corporals in the charge of three captains and eight lieutenants, were sent for 30 days to the Army Infantry School for basic combat training, which was later replicated with the rest of the personnel, the Special Forces and Radio Patrols (Chilean Carabineros and even civilians were trained as Early Warning System, or EWS, officers with portable radios. They were located in border posts to inform the military command of any sighting of Argentine troops or aircraft. These EWS officers were known as 'Radio Patrols'). This procedure was carried out in total secrecy so as not to alarm the population. After this training period, the squads were organised in sections of 45 men, a Senior Staff, four or five non-commissioned officers, first aid practitioners and communications personnel.

The National Mobilisation Plan contemplated the placement of approximately 9,000 Carabineros throughout the country, allocating 268 to the Joint Austral Theatre of Operations (TOAC).

However, only about 2,000 Carabineros were finally mobilised towards the TOAC, also reinforcing the borders of the central and northern areas of the country, in the face of a possible war with the three bordering countries, where the staff provided important information on Argentine troop movements, on the other side of the mountain range.

Table 39: Chilean Army Aviation aircraft types in service in 1978

Type/Years in service	Number of aircraft	Role
Cessna R172K Hawk XP II (1978–2013)	18	Primary trainer/Liaison
Neiva N621/T-25 Universal (1976–1978)*	4	Primary trainer/Light attack
Piper PA-31 Navajo (1970–1995)	4	Light transport
Piper PA-32-260 Cherokee Six (1970–1987)	1	Light transport
Piper PA-28R-200 Cherokee Arrow (1970–1982)	1	Light transport
CASA C.212-100 Aviocar (1978–2013)	4	Troop & cargo transport
Aerospatiale SA-315B Lama (1972–2008)	16	Utility helicopter/SAR
Bell 206B Jet Ranger (1970–1982)	2	Utility helicopter
Bell UH-1H (1970–1978) *	5	Utility helicopter/ troop transport
Aerospatiale SA-330C Puma (1972–1999)	10	Troop & cargo transport
*Transferred to the FACH in February 1978		

Meanwhile, General Pinochet's view of the military capacity of the Carabineros held that the contingent was not ready and would require time to prepare, so it would only join the Armed Forces as a reinforcement. This concept contrasted with that of Major General Nilo Floody, Chief of the Austral Military Region, who pointed out that, although he believed that the Carabineros would have little military training, their retraining period was shorter than expected and at the request of General José Rodríguez Bascur, in charge of the Inspection Zone in Punta Arenas, they were immediately transferred to the combat front.

The specific mission of the Carabineros was to remain in the first line of fire, that is, in the trenches that they had dug themselves in different places in Aysén, Magallanes and Tierra del Fuego. The Carabineros mobilised were fundamentally from the School of NCOs and Special Forces, in addition to personnel from the same area. The mobilisation began on 8 December 1978 in Air Force transport planes, being received in the "Pudeto" Regiment in Punta Arenas, to be deployed according to the planning carried out by the Armed Forces. These Carabineros remained in the area until at least 13 January 1979, which is actually longer than Army personnel.



Between 1972 and 1999, the Chilean Army Aviation used 10 Aerospatiale SA-330C Puma helicopters. (Michel Anciaux)

Table 40: Chilean Carabineros aircraft types in service in 1978²¹

Type	Number of aircraft
Hughes 269B	1
Fairchild-Hiller FH-1100	2
Hughes 300C	2
MBB Bö-105CB	6
Cessna 182Q Skylane	1
Cessna 402	1

The Carabineros Air Police Prefecture had some light aircraft and helicopters, which were based in the Tobalaba Airport, in La Reina, Santiago.



A Chilean Carabinero in the 70s. During the Beagle crisis, thousands of Carabineros were trained by the Chilean Army and sent to the front lines along the long border with Argentina. They used Army uniforms and weapons (Official Release)

APPENDICES

Table 41: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (Officers)¹

Army	Navy	Air Force
Teniente General (Lieutenant General)	Almirante (Admiral)	Brigadier General (Brigadier General)
General de División (Major General)	Vicealmirante (Vice Admiral)	Brigadier Mayor (Brigadier Major)
General de Brigada (Brigadier General)	Contraalmirante (Rear Admiral)	Brigadier (Brigadier)
Coronel Mayor (Colonel Major)	Comodoro de Marina (Commodore of the Navy)	Comodoro Mayor (Commodore Major)
Coronel (Colonel)	Capitán de Navío (Captain)	Comodoro (Commodore)
Teniente Coronel (Lieutenant Colonel)	Capitán de Fragata (Commander)	Viccomodoro (Vice Commodore)
Mayor (Major)	Capitán de Corbeta (Lieutenant Commander)	Mayor (Major)
Capitán (Captain)	Teniente de Navío (Ship Lieutenant)	Capitán (Captain)
Teniente Primero (1st Lieutenant)	Teniente de Fragata (Frigate Lieutenant)	Primer Teniente (1st Lieutenant)
Teniente (Lieutenant)	Teniente de Corbeta (Corvette Lieutenant)	Teniente (Lieutenant)
Subteniente (Sub-Lieutenant)	Guardiamarina (Midshipman)	Alférez (Ensign)

Table 42: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (NCOs)²

Army	Navy	Air Force
Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Master Chief Petty Officer)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)
Sub Oficial Principal (Deputy Chief Officer)	Sub Oficial Principal (Deputy Chief Officer)	Sub Oficial Principal (Deputy Chief Officer)
Sargento Ayudante (Assistant Sergeant)	Sub Oficial Primero (Chief Warrant Officer)	Sub Oficial Ayudante (Assistant Chief Officer)
Sargento Primero (First Sergeant)	Sub Oficial Segundo (2nd Chief Warrant Officer)	Sub Oficial Auxiliar (Auxiliary Chief Officer)
Sargento (Sergeant)	Cabo Principal (Chief Corporal)	Cabo Principal (Chief Corporal)
Cabo Primero (First Corporal)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)
Cabo (Corporal)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)

Table 43: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (rank & file)³

Army	Navy	Air Force
Cadete (Cadet)	Cadete (Cadet)	Cadete (Cadet)
Aspirante (Aspirant)	Aspirante (Aspirant)	Aspirante (Aspirant)
Dragoneante (Dragoneant)	Dragoneante (Dragoneant)	Dragoneante (Dragoneant)
Soldado (Soldier)	Conscripto (Conscript)	Soldado (Soldier)

Table 44: Argentine Coast Guard ranks⁴	
Officers	NCOs
Prefecto General (General Prefect)	Ayudante Mayor (Senior Assistant)
Prefecto Mayor (Senior Prefect)	Ayudante Principal (Chief Assistant)
Prefecto Principal (Chief Prefect)	Ayudante de Primera (First Assistant)
Prefecto (Prefect)	Ayudante de Segunda (Second Assistant)
Sub Prefecto (Deputy Prefect)	Ayudante de Tercera (Third Assistant)
Oficial Principal (Chief Officer)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)
Oficial Auxiliar (Auxiliary Officer)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)
Oficial Ayudante (Assistant Officer)	Marinero (Sailor)

Table 45: Argentine National Gendarmería ranks⁵	
Officers	NCOs
Comandante General (General Commander)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)
Comandante Mayor (Senior Commander)	Sub Oficial Principal (Deputy Chief Officer)
Comandante Principal (Main Commander)	Sargento Ayudante (Assistant Sergeant)
Segundo Comandante (Second Commander)	Sargento Primero (First Sergeant)
Primer Alférez (First Ensign)	Sargento (Sergeant)
Alférez (Ensign)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)
Subalférez (Deputy Ensign)	Cabo (Corporal)
Cadete (Cadet)	Aspirante a Sub Oficial (NCO Aspirant)
-	Gendarme (Gendarme)
-	Gendarme de Segunda (Second Class Gendarme)

Table 46: Chilean Armed Forces ranks (Officers)⁶		
Army	Navy	Air Force
Comandante en Jefe/Capitán General (Commander-in-Chief/Captain General)*	-	-
General de Ejército (General of the Army)	Comandante en Jefe/Almirante (Commander-in-Chief/Admiral)	Comandante en Jefe/General del Aire (Commander-in-Chief/Air General)
General de División (Major General)	Vicealmirante (Vice Admiral)	General de Aviación (Aviation General)
General de Brigada (Brigadier General)	Contraalmirante (Rear Admiral)	General de Brigada Aérea (Air Brigadier General)
Brigadier (Brigadier)	Comodoro (Commodore)	Comodoro (Commodore)
Coronel (Colonel)	Capitán de Navío (Captain)	Coronel de Aviación (Aviation Colonel)
Teniente Coronel (Lieutenant Colonel)	Capitán de Fragata (Commander)	Comandante de Grupo (Group Commander)
Mayor (Major)	Capitán de Corbeta (Lieutenant Commander)	Comandante de Escuadrilla (Squadron Commander)
Capitán (Captain)	Teniente Primero (First Lieutenant)	Capitán de Bandada (Group Captain)

Table 46: Chilean Armed Forces ranks (Officers) (continued)		
Teniente Primero (1st Lieutenant)	Teniente Segundo (Second Lieutenant)	Teniente (Lieutenant)
Teniente (Lieutenant)	Sub Teniente (Sub Lieutenant)	Sub Teniente (Sub Lieutenant)
Subteniente (Sub-Lieutenant)	Guardiamarina (Midshipman)	Alférez (Ensign)
Alférez (Ensign)	-	-
*The rank of Captain General, a 5-star General, was last used by President Pinochet, and had no equivalent rank in the Navy, Air Force and Carabineros.		

Table 47: Chilean Armed Forces ranks (NCOs)⁷		
Chilean Army	Chilean Navy	Chilean Air Force
Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Master Chief Petty Officer)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)
Sub Oficial (Chief Officer)	Sub Oficial (Chief Officer)	Sub Oficial (Chief Officer)
Sargento Primero (First Sergeant)	Sargento Primero (First Sergeant)	Sargento Primero (First Sergeant)
Sargento Segundo (Second Sergeant)	Sargento Segundo (Second Sergeant)	Sargento Segundo (Second Sergeant)
Cabo Primero (First Corporal)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)
Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)
Soldado Primero (First Soldier)	Marinero Primero (First Sailor)	Cabo (Corporal)

Table 48: Chilean Carabineros Ranks⁸	
Officers	NCOs
General Director (General Director)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)
General Sub Director y General Inspector (General Deputy Director & General Inspector)	Sub Oficial (Chief Officer)
General (General)	Sargento Primero (First Sergeant)
Coronel (Colonel)	Sargento Segundo (Second Sergeant)
Teniente Coronel (Lieutenant Colonel)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)
Mayor (Major)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)
Capitán (Captain)	Carabinero (Carabineer)
Teniente (Lieutenant)	-
Sub Teniente (Sub Lieutenant)	-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Academia de Historia Militar, *Ejército de Chile. Un Recorrido por su Historia*. (Santiago: Ebooks Patagonia, 2020.) (Digital ISBN: 978-956-8989-22-4)
- Alvayay Castro, Enrique; Karel Blaha Rodríguez; Jorge Gutiérrez Garay; Reinaldo Reinike Espinoza & Javier Tortello Schuwirth, *Vencer o Morir. La fuerza de un juramento. Crisis de 1978*. (Las Condes, Santiago: Amalfi Ediciones, 2021). (Digital ISBN: 978-956-6172-11-6)
- Amores Oliver, Eduardo Juan, *Guía de Aeronaves Militares 1912–2006. Fuerza Aérea Argentina*. (Buenos Aires: Dirección de Estudios Históricos. Fuerza Aérea Argentina, 2007). (ISBN: 978-987-24086-0-2)
- Aranda Durañona, Comodoro (Ret.) Oscar Luis, *El Vuelo del Cóndor. Fuerza Aérea Argentina. 1912–2012. Cien años protegiendo nuestro cielo*. (Buenos Aires: Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina, 2012). (ISBN: 978-987-22106-6-3)
- Arróspide Rivera, Julio & Raúl Zamora Martínez, *Del Vampire al Viper en la Fuerza Aérea de Chile, ¡Recargado!* Segunda Edición. (Santiago de Chile: Aviation Art & History. Impresiones Valus, 2021). (ISBN: 978-956-09255-4-1)
- Baldini, Atilio & Sergio Bontti, *El SA.315B Lama en la Fuerza Aérea Argentina*. 1ª Edición. (Mendoza: Inca Editorial Cooperativa de Trabajo Ltda, 2003). (ISBN: 987-43-7017-3)
- Baldini, Atilio & Jorge F. Núñez Padín, *North American F-86F-30-NA Sabre*. Serie Fuerza Aérea #16. (Bahía Blanca: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 2009). (ISBN: 978-987-20557-5-2)
- Balza, General Martín Antonio & Mariano Grondona, *Dejo Constancia: Memorias de un General Argentino*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta, 2001). (ISBN 950-49-0813-6)
- Benadava, Santiago, *Recuerdos de la Mediación Pontificia entre Chile y Argentina (1978–1985)*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1999). (ISBN 956-11-1516-6)
- Bulnes Serrano, Francisco & Patricia Arancibia Clavel, *La Escuadra En Acción*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Grijalbo, 2004). (ISBN 956-258-211-6)
- Burzaco, Ricardo, *Acorazados y Cruceros de la Armada Argentina, 1881–1982*. (Buenos Aires: Eugenio B. Ediciones, 1997). (ISBN: 987-967-640-8)
- Burzaco, Ricardo, *Submarinos de la Armada Argentina, 1933–2000*. (Buenos Aires: Eugenio B. Ediciones, 1999). (ISBN: 978-987-9676-41-7)
- Cáceres Godoy, Claudio & Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, *Hawker Hunter FGA.71/FR.71/T.72*. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 1994)
- Carmona, Guillermo Lagos, *Historia de las Fronteras de Chile. Los Tratados de Límites con Argentina*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1980)
- Correa Cuenca, Juan Manuel; Juan José Ahets Etcheverry; Luis Domingo Villar; Jorge Alberto Mones Ruiz & Oscar Luis Aranda Durañona, *Historia de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina. La Aviación de Caza (1912–1982)*, volume IV. (Buenos Aires: Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina, 2005)
- Ejército de Chile, *Familia Acorazada del Ejército de Chile. Historia de los Vehículos Blindados del Ejército, 1936–2009*. (Santiago de Chile: Talleres del Instituto Geográfico Militar. 2010)
- Eló, Marcelo, Daniel Lillo, Alfredo Martínez, Diego Piedra & Francisco Sánchez, *1978 Operación Lanceros. Voces de los Centinelas de Última Esperanza*, 3ª Edición. (Santiago de Chile: Authors' edition, 2020). (ISBN: 978-956-9839-08-5)
- Francois, David, *Chile 1973. The Other 9/11. The Downfall of Salvador Allende*. (Solihull: Helion & Company Ltd., 2018). (ISBN: 978-1-913118-31-0)
- Granedis, Carlos & Marcos Olguín, *Alas de Pioneros: Historia del Grupo de Aviación No. 2 de la Fuerza Aérea de Chile*, Primera Edición. (Santiago: Aviation Art & History, 2021). (ISBN: 978-956-0925-51-0)
- Hagedorn, Dan & Mario Overall, *Douglas DC-3/C-47 in Latin America Military Service*. (Manchester: Crécy Publishing Ltd, 2021). (ISBN: 978-1-91080-947-1)
- Lacoste, Pablo, *La Imagen del Otro en las Relaciones de la Argentina y Chile (1534–2000)*. (Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, 2003). (ISBN: 950-557-556-4)
- López Tobar, Mario: *El 11 en la Mira de un Hawker Hunter*. (Santiago: Editorial Sudamericana, 1999).
- González Madariaga, Exequiel, *Nuestras Relaciones con Argentina: Una historia deprimente. Del Tratado de Paz, Amistad, Comercio y Navegación, al Tratado de Límites de 1881*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1970)
- Mellafe Maturana, Rafael, *Al borde de la Guerra, Chile-Argentina, 1978*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Legatum, 2017). (ISBN: 978-956-9242-23-6)
- Núñez Padín, Jorge F., *McDonnell Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk*. Serie Aeronaval Nr.11. 3ª Edición. (Bahía Blanca: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 2000)
- Núñez Padín, Jorge F., *Dassault Mirage IIICJ/BJ & IIIEA/DA*. Serie Fuerza Aérea #23. (Bahía Blanca: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 2013). (ISBN: 978-987-1682-21-8)
- Núñez Padín, Jorge F., *IAI Dagger, 1978–1982. Parte 1*. Serie Fuerza Aérea Argentina #9. (Bahía Blanca: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 2005)
- Núñez Padín, Jorge F. & Sergio Pedroche, *Sikorsky S-61D.4 & UH-3H Sea King*. Serie Aeronaval #32. (Bahía Blanca: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 2016). (ISBN: 978-987-1682-24-9)
- Núñez Padín, Jorge F., *North American T-28 Fennec*. Serie Aeronaval #28. (Bahía Blanca: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 2010)
- Parvex, Guillermo, *La Tormentosa Historia Limítrofe Entre Chile y Argentina*. (Santiago de Chile: Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial S.A., 2022). (ISBN: 978-956-6056-89-8)
- Passarelli, Bruno, *El Delirio Armado: Argentina-Chile la Guerra que Evitó el Papa*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1998). (ISBN 950-07-1469-8)
- Pavlovic, Gabriel & Esteban Raczyński, 'Helicópteros en la Fuerza Aérea Argentina. Historia y Legado.' 1ª Edición Especial. (Buenos Aires: Artes Gráficas del Sur S.R.L., 2022). (ISBN: 978-987-88-3709-3)
- Rivas, Santiago, *Northrop C/F-5A/B/E/F en Latinoamérica*. Serie Latin Wings #1. (Bahía Blanca: Ediciones Jorge Félix Núñez Padín, 2012). (ISBN: 978-987-1682-15-7)
- Rojas, Arturo Nahuel, *Veteranos de 1978. Relatos de los Protagonistas*, 1st Edition. (Santiago de Chile: Legatum Editores, 2020).

- Rousseaux, Prefecto General (RE) Andrés René, *La Prefectura Naval Argentina en el Teatro de Operaciones Austral, 1978–1979*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Guardacostas, 1998). (ISBN: 987-95927-6-X).
- Rousseaux, Prefecto General (RE) Andrés René, *Historia de las Embarcaciones de la Prefectura Naval Argentina. Tomo III 1950–1982*. (Buenos Aires: Prefectura Naval Argentina, 2012)
- Sánchez Urra, Francisco, *Los Soldados del Mar en Acción: La Infantería de Marina y la Defensa de la Soberanía Austral, 1958–1978*. 10ª Edición. Colección Historia Militar y Pensamiento Estratégico. (Santiago de Chile: Círculo Acton Chile Ediciones, 2020). (ISBN: 978-956-9839-08-5)
- Sequeira, Sebastián; Carlos Cal & Cecilia Catalayub, *Aviación Naval Argentina*. (Mendoza: SS & CC Ediciones, 1984). (ISBN: 978-950-9064-02-7)
- Sigal Fogliani, Ricardo Jorge, *Blindados Argentinos, de Uruguay y Paraguay*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Ayer y Hoy Ediciones, 1997).
- Sigal Fogliani, Ricardo Jorge, *El Sherman en el Ejército Argentino*. (Buenos Aires: 1884 Editorial Círculo Militar, 2014). (ISBN: 978-987-4112-13-2)
- Siminic Ossio, Iván, Rojo 1. *La Fuerza Aérea de Chile en la Crisis del Beagle de 1978*. Primera Edición. (Santiago de Chile: Academia de Guerra Aérea, 2021). (ISBN: 978-956-09714-0-1)
- Vio Valdivieso, Fabio, *La Mediación de su S.S. el Papa Juan Pablo II*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Aconcagua, 1984).

Magazines

- Archivo de la Legión de Infantería de Marina: Desafíos del Cuerpo de Infantería de Marina ante la crisis del Beagle de 1978. (Valparaíso: Article published in *Revista Mar – Órgano de Difusión de la Liga Marítima de Chile*. Nr. 205, 2019). (ISSN: 0047-5866)
- Burzaco, Ricardo, La Fuerza de Submarinos de la Armada Argentina en la crisis de 1978. (Buenos Aires: Article published in *Revista Defensa y Seguridad*, Nr.43).
- Fernández Rodríguez, Arturo, 1978: Vivencias de Quienes Estuvieron en las Trincheras. (Santiago de Chile: Article published in the magazine *Perspectivas de Historia Militar of the Academia de Historia Militar*, December 2018).
- Morán, Teniente de Fragata Sebastián Emiliano, Los Pactos de Mayo. La Paz entre países hermanos. Departamento de Estudios Históricos Navales. Armada Argentina.
- McIntyre Astorga, Vicealmirante Ronald, 1978: La Guerra que no fue. Un análisis 40 años después. (Valparaíso: Article published in *Revista Mar – Órgano de Difusión de la Liga Marítima de Chile*. Nr.205, 2019). (ISSN: 0047-5866)
- Ostornol Varela, Capitán de Navío Sergio, La Guerra Antes de la Guerra. (Valparaíso: Article published in *Revista Mar – Órgano de Difusión de la Liga Marítima de Chile*. Nr.205, 2019). (ISSN: 0047-5866)
- Pulgar Neira, Sergio Hermann & Miguel A. Hervé Claude, Historia, Perfiles, Fotos y Planos del Douglas DC-6A/B cuatrimotor de transporte del Grupo de Aviación Nro. 10 de la FACH, 1966–1981. *Dossier Histórico Modelístico*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Histórico Modelística. Santiago de Chile, 2005).
- Timmermann, Freddy, Racionalidades de la guerra y La Paz. Argentina-Chile 1977–1984. *Cuadernos de Historia* 29. (Santiago: Departamento de Ciencias Históricas. Universidad de Chile, septiembre 2008).
- Werner Cavada, Eduardo, Medios Aéreos embarcados en la Armada de Chile. (Santiago de Chile: Article published in *Boletín* Nr. 18, Museo Nacional Aeronáutico y del Espacio, Dirección General de Aeronáutica Civil, 2019). (ISSN: 0719-0239)

- Zamora, Raúl y Javier Carrera, La Fuerza Aérea de Chile en la Crisis del Beagle. (Santiago: Article published in *Revista Enfoque Estratégico*, 22 de febrero de 2008).
- Zegers Ariztía, Cristian, Conflicto con Argentina 1978: Proceso político y diplomático. (Valparaíso: Article published in *Revista Mar – Órgano de Difusión de la Liga Marítima de Chile*. Nr.205, 2019). (ISSN: 0047-5866)

Newspapers

- Martinic, Ivan, 'La Fuerza de Submarinos de la Armada de Chile en el conflicto de 1978'. (Santiago de Chile: Article published in *Diario El Mercurio*).
- Web Pages
- Argentine Army Aviation in <https://loudandclearisnotenough.blogspot.com/p/ejercito-argentino-cuando-el-4.html>
- Argentine Air Force, Naval Aviation, Army Aviation, Prefectura Naval Aviation and Gendarmeria Aviation data in <https://www.amilarg.com.ar/index.html>
- Fundación Histarmar, Historia y Arqueología Marítima: 'Buques de la Armada Argentina, 1900–2017' in www.histarmar.com.ar
- Fundación Histarmar, Historia y Arqueología Marítima: 'Aviación Naval Argentina' in www.histarmar.com.ar
- https://crisisbeagle.blogspot.com/2015/03/alberto-n-manfredi-h_24.html
- Carabineros de Chile Aviation in <https://www.capecar.cl/historia/>
- Chilean Naval Aviation history in <https://www.defensa.com/en-abierto/perspectiva-historica-aviacion-naval-chile>
- <https://aviationrainbows.com/2018/05/27/la-aviacion-naval-de-la-armada-de-chile/>
- Chilean Navy ships in <https://www.armada.cl/tradicion-e-historia/unidades-historicas/unidades-historicas>
- Argentine & Chilean armament in <https://aquellasarmasdeguerra.wordpress.com/>
- Demining process in Chile in: <https://www.defensa.com/chile/avanza-el-desminado-en-chile>

Conference Paper

- Bravo Valdivieso, Germán, 'Buques de la Armada construidos en Chile'. (Santiago de Chile: Lecture given on 28 March 2006)

NOTES

Chapter 1

- Notes: *uti possidetis* is a Latin ter, roughly meaning ‘as you possess, so shall you possess’.
- de jure* is a Latin term meaning ‘by law’ or according to rightful entitlement or claim.
- res nullius* is a Latin term denoting ‘nobody’s property’, or a thing which has no owner.
- Political Constitution of Chile, 1822.
- Mellafe Maturana, Rafael, *Al Borde de la Guerra, Chile-Argentina, 1978*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Legatum, 2017). (ISBN: 978-956-9242-23-6).
- Mellafe Maturana, Rafael, *Al borde de la Guerra, Chile-Argentina, 1978*. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Legatum, 2017). (ISBN: 978-956-9242-23-6).
- Protocol of Errázuriz-Quino Costa of Limits between Argentina and Chile signed in Santiago de Chile on 1 May 1893.
- Not to be confused with the dreadnought-type battleships *Rivadavia* and *Moreno*, built at the American Fore River Shipyard and launched in 1911.

Chapter 2

-

Chapter 3

- Siminic Ossio, Iván, Rojo 1. *La Fuerza Aérea de Chile en la Crisis del Beagle de 1978*, Primera Edición. (Academia de Guerra Aérea. Santiago. 2021).

Chapter 4

-

Chapter 5

-

Chapter 6

-

Chapter 7

- Pablo Lacoste, *La Imagen del Otro en las Relaciones de la Argentina y Chile (1534–2000)*, (Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, 2003). (ISBN: 950-557-556-4).
- Also known as claim preclusion, it is the Latin term for a matter already decided.
- Pedro Espina Ritchie, *Los Problemas Limítrofes con Argentina. Protocolos de Arbitraje de Junio de 1960*, (Comité Patria y Soberanía, Santiago de Chile, 1962), p.18.

Chapter 8

- de facto is a Latin language expression meaning in effect, in fact although not necessarily by law.
- Alberto Marín Madrid, *El Arbitraje del Beagle y la Actitud Argentina*, (Editorial Universitaria, Santiago de Chile, 1978), p.130.
- The Clarín newspaper, in its edition of Thursday 26 January 1978, p.2. Also, León Consuelo & Nelson Llanos, *La Controversia del Canal Beagle. Perspectivas Periodísticas y Documentos Oficiales, 1977–1985*. (Editorial LW, 2018), p.141.

Chapter 9

- La Razón* newspaper, in its edition of 30 November 1978, p.3.
- A Chilean TV programme called, ‘Informe Especial. Los Grandes Temas de Chile y el Mundo,’ broadcast on Televisión Nacional de Chile in 2008.
- Pablo Lacoste, *La Imagen del Otro en las Relaciones de la Argentina y Chile (1534–2000)*. (Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, 2003). (ISBN: 950-557-556-4).

Chapter 10

- Algunas armas utilizadas durante el Conflicto del Beagle: La guerra que no fue 1978. <https://aquellasarmasdeguerra.wordpress.com/>

Chapter 11

- María Eugenia Oyarzún. Augusto Pinochet, *Diálogos con su Historia* (Editorial Sudamericana, Santiago, Chile, 1999).
- 1978 fue un año especial, Fuerzas Armadas e Historia Militar, martes 30 de marzo de 2006 <https://www.fuerzas-armadas.blogspot.com.ar>

Chapter 12

-

Chapter 13

- Aranda Durañona, Comodoro (Ret.) Oscar Luis, *El Vuelo del Cóndor. Fuerza Aérea Argentina. 1912–2012 Cien Años Protegiendo Nuestro Cielo*. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina. Buenos Aires. 2012).
- Amores Oliver, Eduardo Juan, *Guía de Aeronaves Militares 1912–2006. Fuerza Aérea Argentina. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos. Fuerza Aérea Argentina. Buenos Aires. 2007)*.
- Fundación Histarmar, Historia y Arqueología Marítima, Buques de la Armada Argentina, 1900–2017, in www.histarmar.com.ar
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Sequeira, Sebastián; Carlos Cal & Cecilia Catalayub, Aviación Naval Argentina. SS & CC Ediciones. Mendoza. 1984.
- <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/ejercito>
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Algunas armas utilizadas durante el Conflicto del Beagle: La guerra que no fue 1978. <https://aquellasarmasdeguerra.wordpress.com/>
- Argentine Army Aviation in <https://loudandclearisnotenought.blogspot.com/p/ejercito-argentino-cuando-el-4.html>
- <https://loudandclearisnotenought.blogspot.com/p/gendarmeria-nacional-argentina.html>

Chapter 14

- Siminic Ossio, Iván, Rojo 1. *La Fuerza Aérea de Chile en la crisis del Beagle de 1978*. Primera Edición. (Academia de Guerra Aérea. Santiago. 2021).
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Chilean Naval Aviation history in <https://www.defensa.com/en-abierto/perspectiva-historica-aviacion-naval-chile>
- <https://aviationrainbows.com/2018/05/27/la-aviacion-naval-de-la-armada-de-chile/>
- Ibid.*
- Francois, David, *Chile 1973. The other 9/11 : The downfall of Salvador Allende*. (Solihull: Helion & Company Ltd., 2018). (ISBN: 978-1-9131118-31-0).
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- Ejército de Chile, *Familia Acorazada del Ejército de Chile. Historia de los Vehículos Blindados del Ejército, 1936–2009*. (Santiago de Chile: Talleres del Instituto Geográfico Militar. 2010).
- Comando de Aviación del Ejército de Chile (CAVE) in <http://ivansiminic.blogspot.com/2018/04/>
- Carabineros de Chile Aviation in <https://www.capecar.cl/historia>

Appendices

- <https://www.fuerzas-armadas.mil.ar/GradosMilitares.aspx>
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/prefectura naval/jerarquias>
- <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/jerarquias-de-gendarmeria-nacional>
- <https://www.guiature.cl/equivalencia-cargos-grados-instituciones.html>
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*

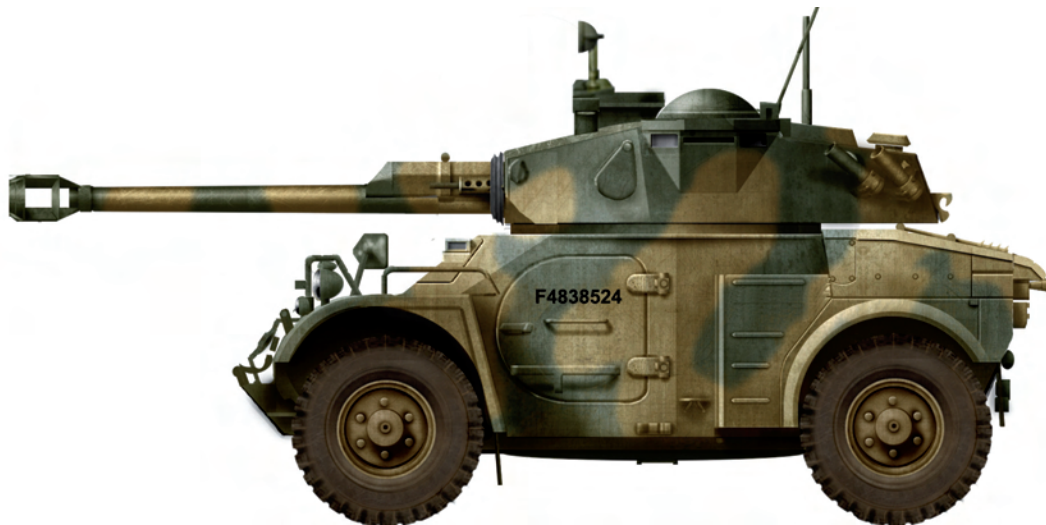
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antonio Luis Sapienza Fracchia was born in Asunción, Paraguay on 14 May 1960. He graduated from the Catholic University of Asunción where he got a B.A. in Clinical Psychology. He also took specialised English courses at Tulane University of New Orleans, Louisiana, and teaching methodology at San Diego State University in California. He is retired but had previously worked for 40 years as an English Teacher and one of the Academic Coordinators at the Centro Cultural Paraguayo-Americano (CCPA), a binational institute in Asunción. Married with two children, he resides in the Capital.

He is an Aviation Historian who has written more than 500 articles in specialised magazines and on web pages on Paraguayan Aviation history and has given numerous lectures in schools, universities, institutes, military and civil institutions in Paraguay and abroad. Since 2010, he has been an aviation history professor to the Paraguayan Air Force (FAP). He has published 22 books since 1996, this one being his eighth with Helion. He received a total of six decorations for his academic merits, two from Argentina, one from Brazil and three from his own country, Paraguay.



A M4A4 Sherman *Repotenciado* ('re-powered') medium tank, as of the 1970s, with a FTR L44/57 105mm gun calibre, and a Browning machine gun near commander's hatch. All such vehicles were acquired in the late 1940s, and 120 were upgraded in 1978 because of tensions with Chile. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



Lacking tanks and searching for a vehicle capable of overcoming the very poor off-road conditions, in 1977 the Argentine Army decided to place an order for 60 Panhard AML-90 armoured cars from France, all with the D921/GIAT F1 90mm calibre 90mm gun as primary armament. This relatively small, but highly reliable and well-armed, vehicle proved popular in service and was to see deployment not only along the border with Chile, but, with the 181st Armoured Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, on the Falklands in 1982. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



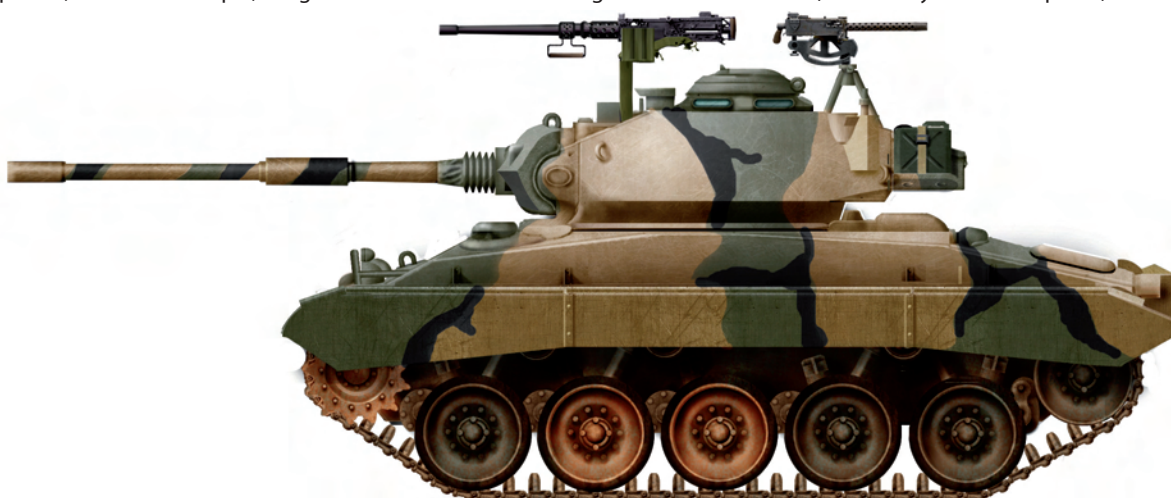
While the Argentine Army still operated a number of old M2/M3 half-tracks left over from earlier years, the primary armoured personnel carriers of the 1970s were M113s. Over time, Buenos Aires acquired a total of 70 M113A1s with ACAV-kit, 204 M113A2s (one of which is shown here, partially covered by a camouflage net), and 114 M113A2s armed with 20mm cannons. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



The M41 Walker Bulldog was a light tank developed in the early 1950s with intention of it replacing the M24 Chaffee of Second World War vintage. It had armour up to 25mm on the front turret and hull, and was armed with a M32A1 76mm calibre gun, one Browning M1919A4 coaxially installed 7.62mm calibre machine gun, and one pintle-mounted Browning M2 12.7mm calibre machine gun. Typically, Chilean Army M41s retained their dark olive green overall livery and wore large turret numbers in white alongside the national insignia. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



The Chilean Army acquired a total of 60 M41A3 Walker Bulldogs, and they proved more mobile and agile, but especially easier to maintain and better-armed, than the M24 Chaffee. Although the turret was cramped and noisy, the stabilised main gun was simple to operate, and the vehicle carried between 57 and 65 rounds, which offered it significant combat endurance. While Chilean M41s saw some action during the September 1973 coup against President Allende, repeated stand-offs with Argentina were probably their most serious test. By 1978, most had received a camouflage pattern similar to that of the U.S. Army of the period, as in this example, assigned to the 5th Armoured Regiment 'Punta Arenas'. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



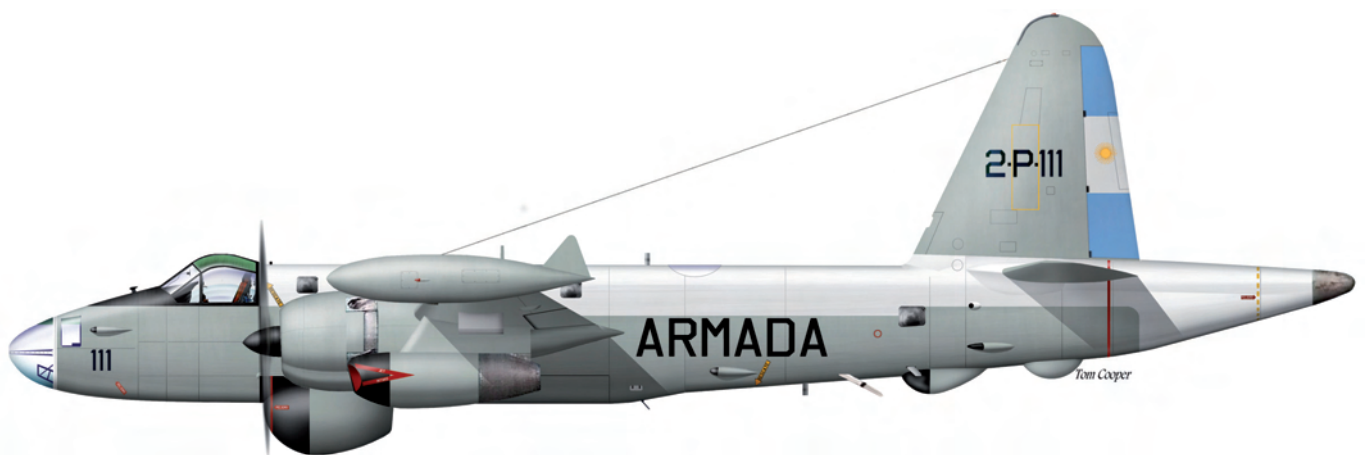
The M24 Chaffee was a lightly armoured reconnaissance vehicle developed in reaction to the British combat experiences in the Western Desert during World War II, and using components originally developed for other, different, combat vehicles – this included the compact M6 75mm calibre gun, which enabled it to engage heavier opponents, too. Chile received 21 M24 Chaffee light tanks in the early 1960s and, although meanwhile surpassed by the much more superior M41 Walker Bulldog, they saw their share of 'action' during the stand-off with Argentina in 1978–1981. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



For much of the 1960s and well into the 1970s, the primary combat aircraft of the Argentine Command of Naval Aviation (COAN) deployed in the south of the country – and thus facing Chile – was the North American T-28 Trojan/Fennec. The COAN acquired a total of 65 between 1965 and 1967, of which 10 were used as a source of spares, while the balance was distributed to the Naval Aviation School, the 1st Naval Attack Squadron, and the 2nd General Purpose Naval Aviation Squadron. This example – 0575/4-G-57 – is shown as it was while serving with the latter unit in 1968, still wearing the silver grey overall livery and armed with a pod for two 7.62mm calibre machine guns under each wing. On 28 November that year, two Argentine T-28s fired warning shots across the bow of the Chilean torpedo boat ACH *Quidora* (PTF-82). (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



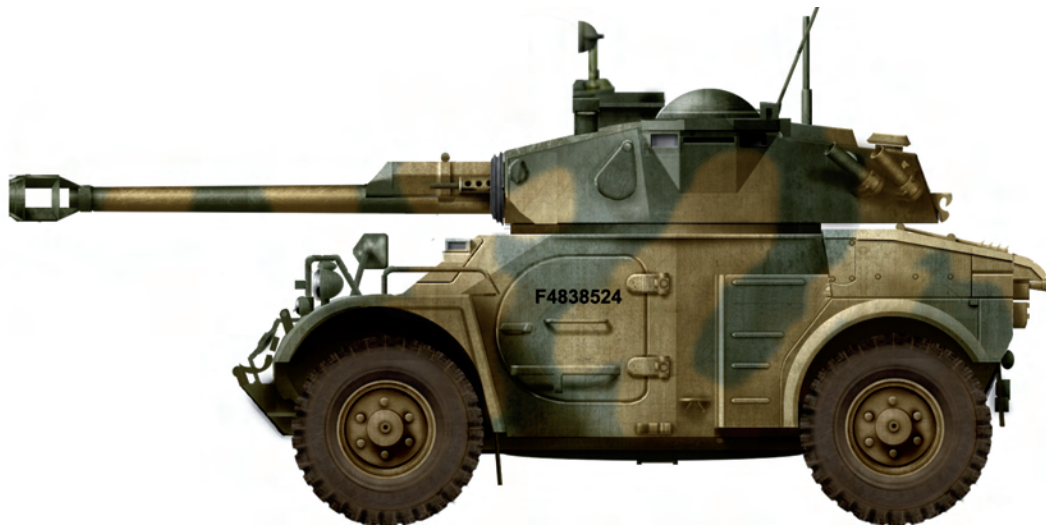
In 1970, the COAN was bolstered with the acquisition of 16 Douglas A-4BQ Skyhawks from surplus stocks of the US Navy. Completely refurbished and equipped with new navigation systems, they entered service with the 3rd Naval Attack Squadron under the designation A-4Q. During the stand-off with Chile of 1978, they were forward-deployed at the Vice Almirante Zar Naval Air Base, outside Trelew, before being embarked on ARA *25 de Mayo*. Designed as attack aircraft, COAN's Skyhawks were regularly armed with AIM-9B Sidewinder air-to-air missiles and served for air defence purposes. During December 1978, they had at least two encounters with Chilean reconnaissance aircraft that were attempting to detect and track the movements of the Argentine Navy. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



The 1st Naval Exploration Squadron of the COAN had a long history of operating Lockheed P-2(P2V) Neptune maritime patrol aircraft. Established in 1959, the Squadron initially flew eight ex-British P2V-5s (serials 2-P-101 to 2-P-108), before acquiring five SP-2FEs from U.S. Navy surplus stocks (serials 2-P-101 to 2-P-105). In 1977, the fleet was enhanced with the acquisition of four much improved SP-2Hs from the U.S.A. (serials 2-P-110 to 2-P-114), one of which is depicted here. Still serving with the 1st Naval Exploration Squadron, and still wearing this livery in off-white, gull grey, and black, the fleet saw intensive deployment during the stand-off with Chile in 1978. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



A M4A4 Sherman *Repotenciado* ('re-powered') medium tank, as of the 1970s, with a FTR L44/57 105mm gun calibre, and a Browning machine gun near commander's hatch. All such vehicles were acquired in the late 1940s, and 120 were upgraded in 1978 because of tensions with Chile. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



Lacking tanks and searching for a vehicle capable of overcoming the very poor off-road conditions, in 1977 the Argentine Army decided to place an order for 60 Panhard AML-90 armoured cars from France, all with the D921/GIAT F1 90mm calibre 90mm gun as primary armament. This relatively small, but highly reliable and well-armed, vehicle proved popular in service and was to see deployment not only along the border with Chile, but, with the 181st Armoured Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, on the Falklands in 1982. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



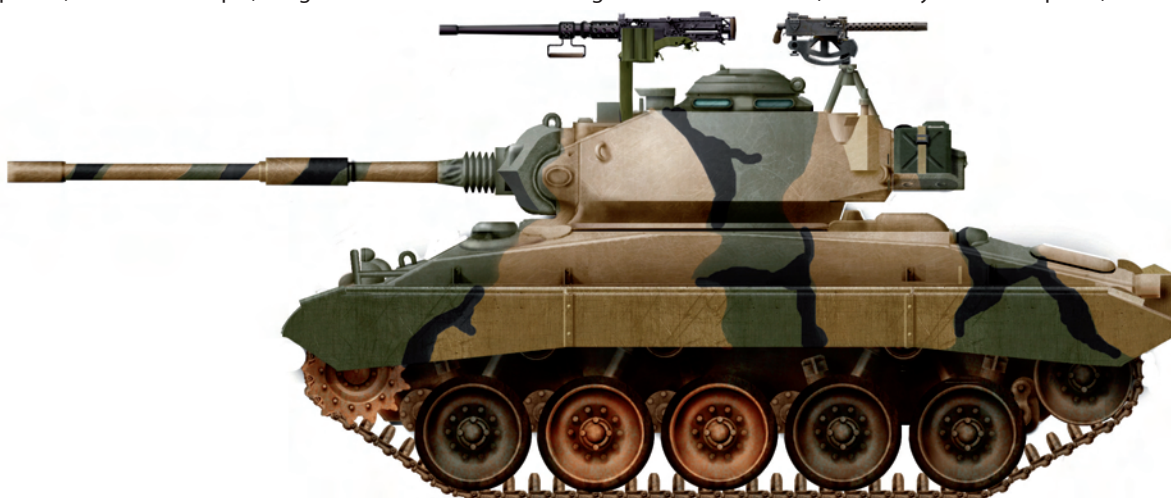
While the Argentine Army still operated a number of old M2/M3 half-tracks left over from earlier years, the primary armoured personnel carriers of the 1970s were M113s. Over time, Buenos Aires acquired a total of 70 M113A1s with ACAV-kit, 204 M113A2s (one of which is shown here, partially covered by a camouflage net), and 114 M113A2s armed with 20mm cannons. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



The M41 Walker Bulldog was a light tank developed in the early 1950s with intention of it replacing the M24 Chaffee of Second World War vintage. It had armour up to 25mm on the front turret and hull, and was armed with a M32A1 76mm calibre gun, one Browning M1919A4 coaxially installed 7.62mm calibre machine gun, and one pintle-mounted Browning M2 12.7mm calibre machine gun. Typically, Chilean Army M41s retained their dark olive green overall livery and wore large turret numbers in white alongside the national insignia. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



The Chilean Army acquired a total of 60 M41A3 Walker Bulldogs, and they proved more mobile and agile, but especially easier to maintain and better-armed, than the M24 Chaffee. Although the turret was cramped and noisy, the stabilised main gun was simple to operate, and the vehicle carried between 57 and 65 rounds, which offered it significant combat endurance. While Chilean M41s saw some action during the September 1973 coup against President Allende, repeated stand-offs with Argentina were probably their most serious test. By 1978, most had received a camouflage pattern similar to that of the U.S. Army of the period, as in this example, assigned to the 5th Armoured Regiment 'Punta Arenas'. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



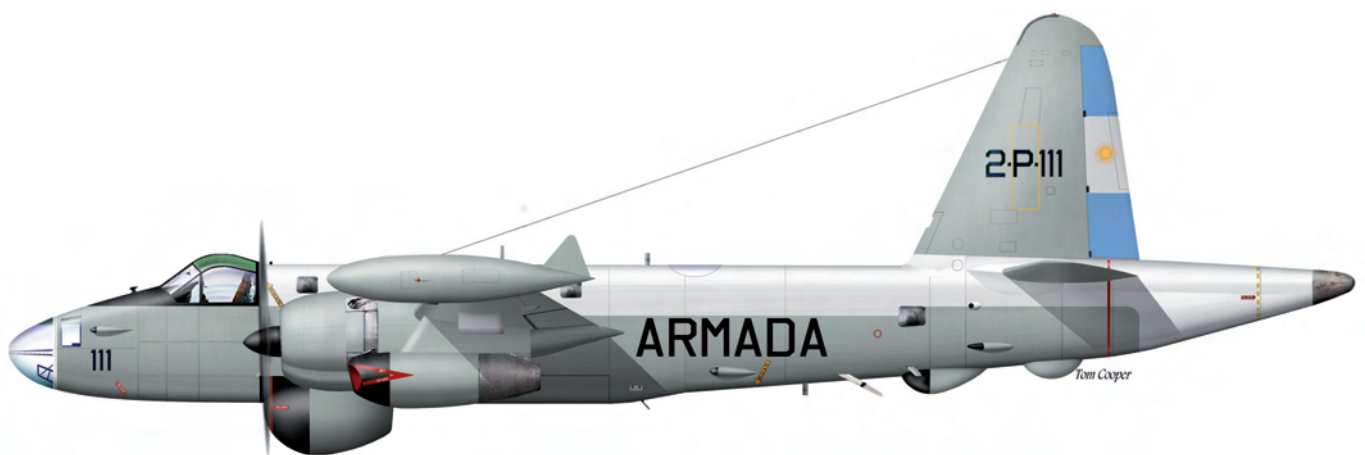
The M24 Chaffee was a lightly armoured reconnaissance vehicle developed in reaction to the British combat experiences in the Western Desert during World War II, and using components originally developed for other, different, combat vehicles – this included the compact M6 75mm calibre gun, which enabled it to engage heavier opponents, too. Chile received 21 M24 Chaffee light tanks in the early 1960s and, although meanwhile surpassed by the much more superior M41 Walker Bulldog, they saw their share of 'action' during the stand-off with Argentina in 1978–1981. (Artwork by David Bocquelet)



For much of the 1960s and well into the 1970s, the primary combat aircraft of the Argentine Command of Naval Aviation (COAN) deployed in the south of the country – and thus facing Chile – was the North American T-28 Trojan/Fennec. The COAN acquired a total of 65 between 1965 and 1967, of which 10 were used as a source of spares, while the balance was distributed to the Naval Aviation School, the 1st Naval Attack Squadron, and the 2nd General Purpose Naval Aviation Squadron. This example – 0575/4-G-57 – is shown as it was while serving with the latter unit in 1968, still wearing the silver grey overall livery and armed with a pod for two 7.62mm calibre machine guns under each wing. On 28 November that year, two Argentine T-28s fired warning shots across the bow of the Chilean torpedo boat ACH *Quidora* (PTF-82). (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



In 1970, the COAN was bolstered with the acquisition of 16 Douglas A-4B Skyhawks from surplus stocks of the US Navy. Completely refurbished and equipped with new navigation systems, they entered service with the 3rd Naval Attack Squadron under the designation A-4Q. During the stand-off with Chile of 1978, they were forward-deployed at the Vice Almirante Zar Naval Air Base, outside Trelew, before being embarked on ARA *25 de Mayo*. Designed as attack aircraft, COAN's Skyhawks were regularly armed with AIM-9B Sidewinder air-to-air missiles and served for air defence purposes. During December 1978, they had at least two encounters with Chilean reconnaissance aircraft that were attempting to detect and track the movements of the Argentine Navy. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



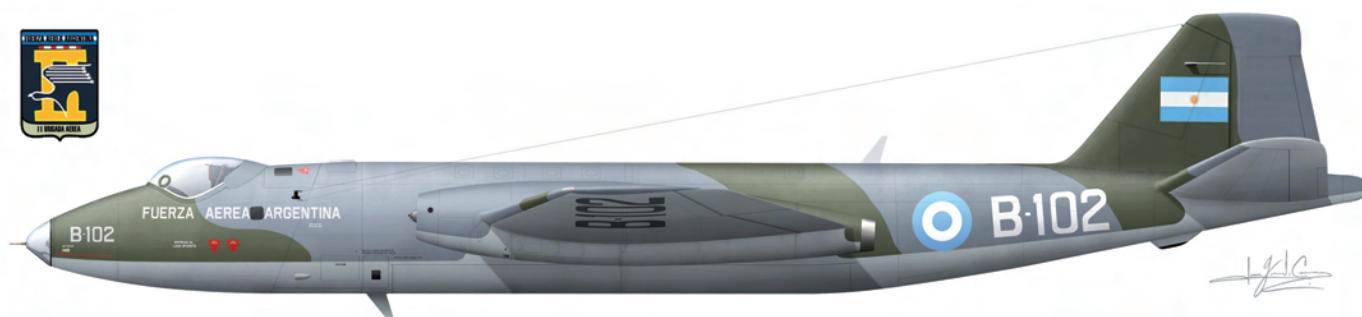
The 1st Naval Exploration Squadron of the COAN had a long history of operating Lockheed P-2(P2V) Neptune maritime patrol aircraft. Established in 1959, the Squadron initially flew eight ex-British P2V-5s (serials 2-P-101 to 2-P-108), before acquiring five SP-2FEs from U.S. Navy surplus stocks (serials 2-P-101 to 2-P-105). In 1977, the fleet was enhanced with the acquisition of four much improved SP-2Hs from the U.S.A. (serials 2-P-110 to 2-P-114), one of which is depicted here. Still serving with the 1st Naval Exploration Squadron, and still wearing this livery in off-white, gull grey, and black, the fleet saw intensive deployment during the stand-off with Chile in 1978. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



During periodic tensions with Chile in the late 1960s, the Argentine Air Force found itself in an unpleasant situation because of the lack of modern interceptors. Aiming to find a solution, the FAA attempted to purchase McDonnell Douglas F-4E Phantom IIs from the U.S.A., but Washington refused negotiations. Eventually, the solution was found in the acquisition of 17 Dassault Mirage IIIA interceptors and two Mirage IIIDA two-seat conversion trainers from France. Interestingly, the jets in question – all assigned to the VIII Brigada Aérea – received the camouflage pattern applied on F-4Es of the U.S. Air Force, including tan (FS30219), light green (FS34102) and dark green (FS34079) on upper surfaces and sides, and light grey (FS35522) on undersides. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



The first batch of single-seat Mirage IIIEAs (serials I-003 to I-012) arrived equipped with obsolete Matra R.530 air-to-air missiles, only one of which could be installed under the centreline. It was only the second batch (serials I-013 to I-017) that was delivered already equipped with launch rails for much more advanced Matra R.550s. Even then, the first batch of these reached Argentina only in early 1982. As a result, the aircraft could then be armed with a total of three air-to-air missiles (in addition to two internally-installed 30mm DEFA guns), as shown here. Insert is shown the crest of the VIII Brigada Aérea (upper left corner), and a ferry drop tank with capacity of 1,300 litre. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



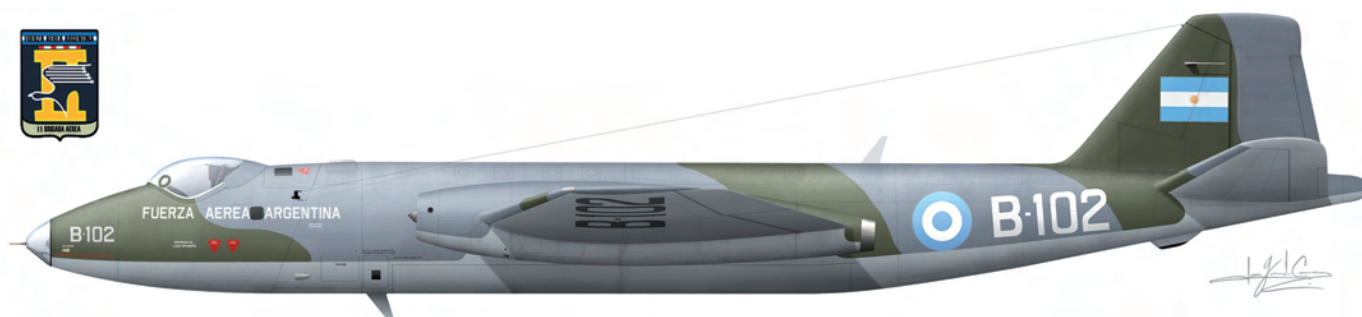
The most potent offensive asset of the FAA of the 1970s was the fleet of English Electric/BAC Canberra bombers. A total of 10 B.Mk 62s (serials B-101 to B-109) and 2 B.Mk 64s (export sub-variant of the T.Mk 4; serials B-110 and B-111) had been acquired since 1968, and operated by the II Brigada Aérea from Paraná Air Base. All but one (B-103, written off in an accident in 1971) underwent local overhauls at the Aérea Material de Río IV, in 1975, and were thus available for deployment to the Comandante Espora Naval Air Base, with the Canberra Squadron during the stand-off with Chile, in 1978. All wore a standardised camouflage pattern in dark sea grey (BS381C/638) and dark green (BS381C/641) on upper surfaces, and light aircraft grey (BS381C/627) on under surfaces. (Artwork by Luca Canossa)



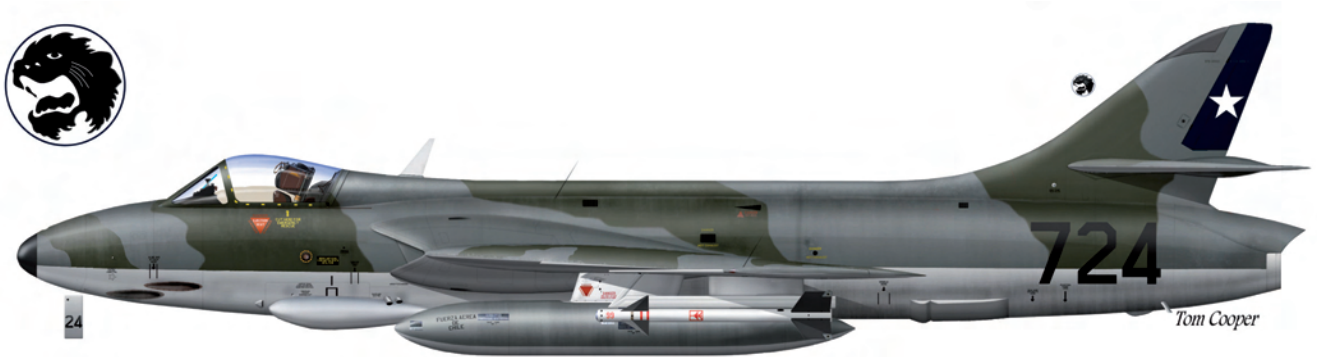
During periodic tensions with Chile in the late 1960s, the Argentine Air Force found itself in an unpleasant situation because of the lack of modern interceptors. Aiming to find a solution, the FAA attempted to purchase McDonnell Douglas F-4E Phantom IIs from the U.S.A., but Washington refused negotiations. Eventually, the solution was found in the acquisition of 17 Dassault Mirage IIIA interceptors and two Mirage IIIDA two-seat conversion trainers from France. Interestingly, the jets in question – all assigned to the VIII Brigada Aérea – received the camouflage pattern applied on F-4Es of the U.S. Air Force, including tan (FS30219), light green (FS34102) and dark green (FS34079) on upper surfaces and sides, and light grey (FS35522) on undersides. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



The first batch of single-seat Mirage IIIEAs (serials I-003 to I-012) arrived equipped with obsolete Matra R.530 air-to-air missiles, only one of which could be installed under the centreline. It was only the second batch (serials I-013 to I-017) that was delivered already equipped with launch rails for much more advanced Matra R.550s. Even then, the first batch of these reached Argentina only in early 1982. As a result, the aircraft could then be armed with a total of three air-to-air missiles (in addition to two internally-installed 30mm DEFA guns), as shown here. Insert is shown the crest of the VIII Brigada Aérea (upper left corner), and a ferry drop tank with capacity of 1,300 litre. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



The most potent offensive asset of the FAA of the 1970s was the fleet of English Electric/BAC Canberra bombers. A total of 10 B.Mk 62s (serials B-101 to B-109) and 2 B.Mk 64s (export sub-variant of the T.Mk 4; serials B-110 and B-111) had been acquired since 1968, and operated by the II Brigada Aérea from Paraná Air Base. All but one (B-103, written off in an accident in 1971) underwent local overhauls at the Aérea Material de Río IV, in 1975, and were thus available for deployment to the Comandante Espora Naval Air Base, with the Canberra Squadron during the stand-off with Chile, in 1978. All wore a standardised camouflage pattern in dark sea grey (BS381C/638) and dark green (BS381C/641) on upper surfaces, and light aircraft grey (BS381C/627) on under surfaces. (Artwork by Luca Canossa)



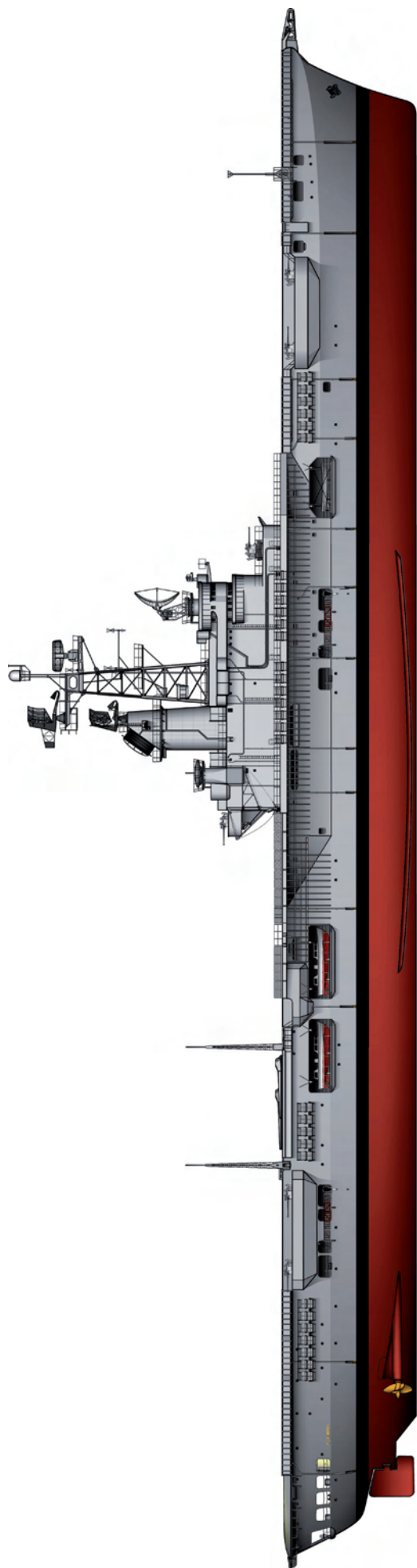
By virtue of its fleet of more than 30 Hawker Hunter F.Mk 71s (and six Hunter FR.Mk 71 reconnaissance fighters), and prior to the arrival of Mirage IIIEAs, the Chilean Air Force was superior to that of Argentina. Hunters were slightly faster, and carried heavier internal armament, including four 30mm ADEN guns, than the North American F-86F Sabres of its adversary. Moreover, in 1976, they were adapted to carry the Israeli-made Rafael Shafir Mk.II air-to-air missiles, as illustrated on this example that was involved in flight-testing of that project. The fleet was operated by Grupos 8 and 9. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



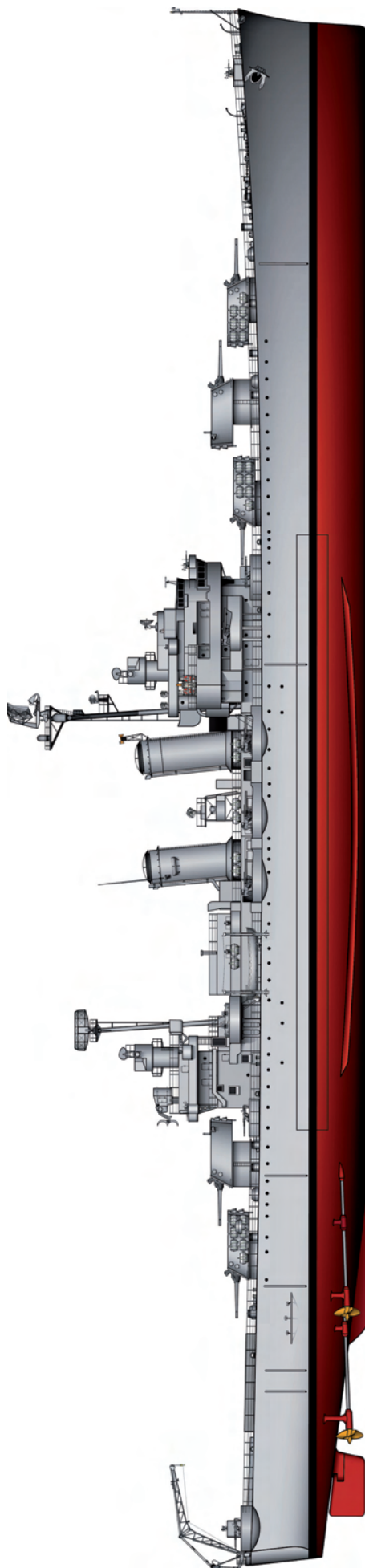
All Chilean Hunters wore the standardised camouflage pattern in dark sea grey (BS381C/638) and dark green (BS381C/641) on upper surfaces, and high-speed silver finish on their lower surfaces. Their serials were in the range J-700 upwards. As well as proving effective interceptors, the Hunters were potent ground-attack aircraft: in addition to the classic, Swiss-made, R80 Sura unguided rockets (up to 12 of which could be installed under each wing), they could also carry U.S. made Mk.81 and Mk.82 bombs (125kg and 250kg calibre respectively), as well as Chilean made Cardoen CB.250 cluster bomb units (shown in insert). (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



In 1976, the Hunter-equipped and Cerro Moreno-based Grupo 7 was re-equipped with a total of 15 Northrop F-5E Tiger II fighter-bombers and 3 F-5F two-seat conversion trainers. Henceforth, the principal duty of the unit became interception and air combat, for which its jets could be armed with two internal 20mm Colt M39 guns, and a pair of AIM-9J Sidewinder, infra-red homing air-to-air missiles. In 1976, Israeli-made Shafrir Mk.II air-to-air missiles were added to the arsenal. The entire fleet wore this low-visibility camouflage pattern consisting of Light Compass Grey (FS36375) and Dark Compass Grey (FS36320), applied on upper and lower surfaces. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



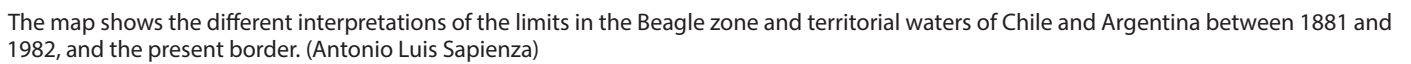
The pride of the Argentine Navy in the 1970s and 1980s was the *Colossus*-class aircraft carrier ARA 25 de Mayo (V-2). Constructed in Great Britain during the final stages of the Second World War, she was sold to The Netherlands in 1948 and served as HNLMS *Karel Doorman*. Argentina acquired the ship in turn in 1968, and equipped it with an air group including A-4Q Skyhawks, Grumman S-2 Trackers, and Sikorsky S-61 Sea King helicopters. She saw intensive operations off the Beagle Channel in 1978–1979, pending a refit and upgrade to enable operations of Dassault Super Étendard strike aircraft in 1981. (Artwork by Ivan Zajac)



The second major warship of the Argentine Navy in 1978 was the venerable cruiser ARA *General Belgrano* (C-4) of the *Brooklyn*-class. Originally commissioned into the US Navy in 1938, she served in the Pacific during the Second World War. Sold to Argentina in 1951, the ship was originally re-named ARA 17 Octubre, before receiving her final name five years later. In 1967–1968, she underwent a major upgrade, including the installation of modern radar and two Sea Cat launchers, but retained her primary armament of 15 6-inch (152mm) guns in five turrets, eight 5-inch (127mm) guns amidships, two quad and two twin 40mm Bofors L40/60, and 10 twin 20mm anti-aircraft guns. (Artwork by Ivan Zajac)



Geographical location of all the Air Brigades of the Argentine Air Force and of the Wings of the Chilean Air Force in 1978.
(Antonio Luis Sapienza)





Latin America @ War - concise and insightful text, original photography and unique colour artworks, examining conflict throughout South America in the 20th century and beyond.

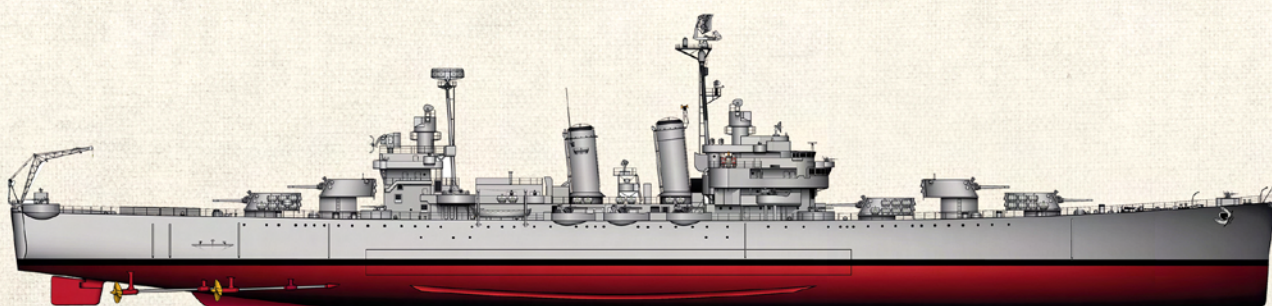
The Beagle conflict was a territorial dispute between Argentina and Chile over the determination of the layout of the eastern mouth of the Beagle Channel, which affected the sovereignty of the islands located south of the channel, and east of Cape Horn and its adjacent maritime spaces.

The first antecedents of the conflict date back to 1888, seven years after the signing of the Treaty of Limits. In 1901, the first Argentine map appeared in which some of the islands in question were drawn as within Argentina's control. Despite the small size of the islands, their strategic value between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans caused a long conflict between the two South American

states that went on for much of the 20th century, causing a number of 'minor' incidents, and almost culminating in a major war.

The conflict focused on the dispute over the sovereignty of the islands and the oceanic rights generated by them to Chile, but it was not limited exclusively to these islands.

Volume 1 of *The Beagle Conflict* mini-series covers the origins of the dispute and border clashes between the two countries from the time of the independence of Chile and Argentina from the Spanish Crown, until early 1978, and is illustrated with original photographs, custom-drawn artworks and maps.



AFRICA @ WAR
SERIES

ASIA @ WAR
SERIES

EUROPE @ WAR
SERIES

MIDDLE EAST @ WAR
SERIES

TECHNOLOGY @ WAR
SERIES



www.helion.co.uk
f t i helionbooks

ISBN 978-1-804513-73-6

